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# INDUSTRIAL DAY-DREAMS

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STUDIES IN INDUSTRIAL  
ETHICS AND ECONOMICS







INDUSTRIAL  
DAY-DREAMS

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# INDUSTRIAL DAY-DREAMS

STUDIES IN INDUSTRIAL  
ETHICS AND ECONOMICS

BY  
SAMUEL E. KEEBLE

NEW EDITION



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I

DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO THE MEMORY

OF MY

TWO DECEASED BROTHERS

ROBERT KEEBLE

AND THE

REV. GEORGE T. KEEBLE

BOTH WORKMEN THAT NEEDED NOT TO BE ASHAMED



## PREFACE

No one has a deeper sense of the inadequacy of the present book as even a slight contribution to the direct solution of vexed social problems, than has the author. His only hope is that it may have some little indirect influence in stirring up those who have more ability and knowledge than he has, but who perhaps have not devoted much time to the consideration of social questions. The appeal here made is to those whose interests are mainly religious. In many religious circles still there seems to be hardly any idea of the intimate connexion existing between religion and the industrial life of society. Much of the prevailing apathy and indifference would vanish at once if it were realized that their circles intersect. Earnest workers in the religious sphere are often so fully occupied that they lack the most elementary knowledge of the true nature of the problems involved or of the remedies suggested. It is hoped that some such workers will find here an introduction—for this is all it can offer—to the general subject of industrial ethics and economics.

It is urgently necessary that the Christian Church as a whole should address herself to the social problem.

## PREFACE

It will never be rightly solved apart from Christianity. Very much of the solution depends, not merely upon the possession of the Christian temper—though that is of vital importance—but upon the direct application of the ethical standards of Christianity as tests, and of Christian principles as guides, to these problems as such. It ill becomes the Christian Church to be dragged unwillingly at the heels of new ethical movements, which arise without the Church because Christ has been unable to inspire new ideals from within. The Christian Church ought to be in the van, and not in the rear, of all such movements.

A laggard attitude reacts upon the Church herself, creating revulsion and alienation amongst some of the noblest men and women of the land. The Christian Church will never prosper as she ought until she emulates the Hebrew prophets in their attitude towards the social evils of their time. Those prophets held a position in Jewish society analogous to that held to-day by the Christian Church in Christendom—the position, namely, of organized and recognized teacher and conscience; and right nobly and fearlessly did they discharge their functions. But if the voice of the Christian Church is stifled or muffled, if her words are vacillating or vague, or if they are irrelevant to the present crisis and need, then that Church will betray both her trust and her Lord, and this civilization will disappear as others have done.

The author writes at least to clear his own con-

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science ; but if in that process he should be able to win any ear hitherto heedless, he will be more than repaid for his trouble. Especially would he be thankful to influence the young. It is a rather ominous sign that sometimes the young, even when religiously earnest, are found to be more indifferent to social questions than their seniors—more wrapped up in a narrow Christian Individualism. This is sad, for the young men, at least, should see visions, when the old men dream dreams. One reason for this is a defective conception of Christianity—of its ethics and its scope ; and this argues a fault, not only in the young themselves, but also in all the teachers of Christianity—parents, pastors, and masters.

The title, *INDUSTRIAL DAY-DREAMS*, is meant to indicate the idealistic nature of the contents. Socialistic programmes are mostly ideal, never likely to be realized as they stand, but nevertheless profoundly important in that they originate feelings and forces which will finally bring about a more satisfactory condition of things—a nearer approximation to that ever-elusive social perfection after which social idealists aspire.

The critical part of the book does not profess to cover all the ground, and is not likely, in what it does cover, to win every one's approval. To some it will seem too general and mild, and to others too indiscriminating and censorious. To those who may think it too severe towards Individualism, and too lenient towards Socialism, it may suffice to reply that there

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is no need to be over-careful in either matter. Socialistic schemes are being continually subjected to searching and unsympathetic criticism, in the interest frequently of *laissez-faire*—of a policy of masterly inactivity. It is a much more necessary thing to be tender towards social ideals and idealists, and critical of this not best-of-all-possible industrial worlds. The present system, with its huge and horrid defects, is strongly entrenched in the habits, customs, and prejudices of Englishmen—proverbially slow to change. The evils in it are not only hoary, but tough, and not likely soon to yield to a better order or to a better time. It is expedient, therefore, to be blind to weak points in Socialistic paper-constitutions (especially as there is no danger of their escaping exposure), and to devote energy to criticizing that which is hostile to the ultimate well-being of human society in the system which is in possession; and the more so as these are wellnigh invulnerable from the power of vested interests, hereditary prejudices, and hereditary ignorance.

As to the method adopted, the first two chapters indicate the writer's point of view. The historical part consists of three chapters upon German Socialism, four upon English Socialism, two upon French Socialism, and one upon that international possession, State Socialism. The critical part is threefold: a criticism of Socialism, a criticism of Political Economy, and a criticism of the Modern Industrial System, all from the Christian and ethical point of view.

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A few repetitions may be found in these pages. If so, they will be due either to the necessity for looking at the same facts from a different angle, or from the fact that some of the pages have been delivered, as the footnotes indicate, as addresses to different audiences, and the repetitions were necessary to lucidity.

Finally, the author returns thanks to the editors of the *Methodist Times*, *Great Thoughts*, and the *Preachers' Magazine*, for permission to reprint those pages which have already appeared in their several periodicals.

SHEFFIELD,  
*January*, 1896.





## PREFACE TO NEW EDITION

AT the request of the members of the Union for Social Service, and of many others, the author has consented to republish the following book, which has long been out of print. He is more than ever conscious of its inadequacy, but it seems to many still to have a note and a place of its own. Despite the very different condition of the book-market on social questions to-day in comparison with its state at the date of the issue of the original edition, nothing quite like it has yet appeared to guide elementary students of these subjects. It is thought that it may especially carry the readers of *The Citizen of To-morrow* a stage or two further on their journey.

The book has been revised, annotated, and corrected, and the historical section brought up to date. The author hopes that this little work, which, when it first appeared, was the first on its subject from a Christian and a Methodist source, and seemed then to be premature, may continue to serve the great cause of Christian social reform.

MANCHESTER,

*June 30, 1907.*



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PART I

THE PRELUDE



I  
THE EDUCATION  
OF THE  
SOCIAL SYMPATHIES





# I

## THE EDUCATION OF THE SOCIAL SYMPATHIES

Evil is wrought by want of thought,  
As well as want of heart.

HOOD.

THE great question of the twentieth century is the Social Question. Young Christians especially should study it, for in their hands, humanly speaking, lies the future of the Christian Church. According to their interest in it will be the influence of that Church upon the working classes of this country, especially upon the non-worshipping section—an all too large section—of those classes.

The need of the present and of the immediate future is a wise sympathy with the people, with the 'dim common populations.' It is easy enough to contract disdain for them—to cultivate a feeling of repulsion at their vices, their coarseness, and their ignorance. But such feelings are akin to those of the Latin poet who cried, 'I hate the vulgar crowd!' and are simply heathenish in their arrogance and unbrotherliness. The people must be viewed with the eye of Christ, who, looking upon their physical and moral maladies and miseries, had compassion

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upon them because they were as sheep having no shepherd. Christ saw that the degraded poor were mainly a 'manufactured article'—the product partly of social neglect, social selfishness, and social greed.

Had not the common people, as a body, been for long ages overworked, under-fed, under-clothed, under-paid, under-educated, they would not be as rough, as vulgar, as brutal, and as ignorant, as so many of them are to-day. Christians must learn to do with the poor what Christ did—idealize them. They must view them in God—as redeemed, body and soul; as filled with latent possibilities, and sure of a glorious future. Nothing can be done for the people save by loving the people, and no one can love the people with the requisite depth, wisdom, and endurance who does not view them with eyes anointed by Christ.

The problem for Christians is how rightly to care for the whole man; how to be perfectly alive at once to the material and to the spiritual side of man; how to be true to both, neglectful of neither. This problem can be solved only by an intense and patient study of the life of Jesus Christ. In that life is seen maintained the most perfect balance between man social and man spiritual, man material and man moral—between attention to the wants of the lower and the wants of the higher nature. To the Master, indeed, these are one, or, rather, all is spiritual, and the care of the body is but a disguised (and not always disguised) care for the soul—for the real self.

The secret of success, then, in approaching the condition-of-the-people question, is the possession of a true, deep love of the people, and this is best attained by learning of Christ. His attitude towards them must be

## THE SOCIAL SYMPATHIES

ours if we would gain their ear—if we would successfully call to us the labouring and heavy-laden. ‘Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.’

But, social sympathies gained, they need to be informed, discriminating, educated. They are apt, especially with the young, to be vague, sentimental, unpractical. Mere social ardour and chivalry may lead the uninformed into many quixotic enterprises, and, in tilting against the wind-mills of solid fact, such may be much beaten, battered, and discouraged. The Christian social enthusiast, therefore, should walk warily, acquainted with the danger of his quest.

The moral and spiritual education of the social sympathies is to be gained in the sanctuary, at the feet of Jesus; their intellectual education, in the study. Nothing will better at once educate and inspire the social student than a careful study of the social and industrial history of England. Nor ought any Christian to interfere in labour questions, either by word or deed, who has not had some practical industrial and business experience and read some political economy. Moreover, inasmuch as all Churches and all Governments—witness the latter in Germany and France—will have to reckon with Socialism, the study of Socialism proper should not be omitted.<sup>1</sup>

Social sympathies the young Christian must have if he would do his Master’s work now and in the approaching century. He should beware, above all things else, of religious individualism, of a narrow and un-Christlike type of piety, which can only concern itself with a limited range of Christian duties and doctrines, and is blind to the social sins, social sorrows, and social needs of the

<sup>1</sup> A brief list of books, suitable for beginners, is given at the end of this chapter.

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age. He should educate those sympathies, once gained ; educate them morally, by reading his Bible, by keeping the company of the Old Testament prophets and the Lord Jesus Christ, and by prayer ; educate them intellectually, by the impartial study of social, industrial, and economic facts. He should develop them by helping the people, by mingling with and gaining knowledge of them. He will thus be equipped as a citizen and as a Christian to play his part in saving modern society, on the one hand from greedy self-seekers, and on the other from wild and ignorant enthusiasts. He will help to solve the social problem, and begin the new England 'wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

# THE SOCIAL SYMPATHIES

## LIST OF BOOKS

*The Industrial History of England.* II. de B. Gibbins. (Methuen, 2s. 6d.)

*Six Centuries of Work and Wages.* Thorold Rogers. (Sonnenschein, 10s. 6d.)

*History of Political Economy in England.* L. L. Price. (Methuen, 2s. 6d.)

*History of Political Economy.* J. K. Ingram. (A. & C. Black, 6s.)

*Primer of Political Economy.* Jevons. (Macmillan, 1s.)

*Economics of Industry.* A. and M. P. Marshall. (Macmillan, 3s. 6d.)

*Principles of Economics.* A. Marshall. (Macmillan, 18s.)

*The Principles of Political Economy.* J. S. Mill. (Bell, 3s. 6d.)

*The Labour Movement.* Hobhouse. (Fisher Unwin, 1s.)

*The Evolution of Modern Capitalism.* Hobson. (Walter Scott, 3s. 6d.)

*Past and Present.* Carlyle. (Chapman & Hall, 1s.)

*Unto this Last.* Ruskin. (Allen, 1s.)

*The History of Socialism.* Kirkup. (A. & C. Black, 7s. 6d.)

*Contemporary Socialism.* Rae. (Sonnenschein, 7s. 6d.)

*Tools and the Man.* Washington Gladden. (J. Clarke, 3s. 6d.)

*Socialism.* Flint. (Isbister, 10s. 6d.)

*The Citizen of To-Morrow.* Ed. S. E. Keeble, 1906. (C. H. Kelly, 2s.)

(For further guidance see *The A.B.C. Annotated Bibliography*, by the writer, published for the Wesleyan Methodist Union for Social Service, 1907. C. H. Kelly, 1s.)



II  
SOCIAL  
CHRISTIANITY





## II

# SOCIAL CHRISTIANITY<sup>1</sup>

The social failure of Christianity is not the fault of Christianity, but of us Christians, who have been selfishly individualistic.—  
H. PRICE HUGHES.

‘SOCIAL CHRISTIANITY’ is the title of a volume of sermons and addresses on social questions by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. As a title and a phrase, it is to be preferred before ‘Christian Socialism.’ The latter makes the Church’s social work but a species of the genus Socialism—at least, so far as words go—whereas the former regards it as but one aspect of Christian service. ‘Social Christianity,’ whatever other objections it may be open to, professes subordination to no debatable theory; it simply claims to be an effort to apply Christianity to problems which Socialism has neither created nor cured, and as such it is to be judged. If any of its remedies should happen to coincide with those of Socialism, that will be no reason for calling it Socialism, but rather for regarding Socialism as in those points Christian.

It is not proposed to review in detail Mr. Price Hughes’ interesting and stimulating book; but as the

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Leeds Methodist Ministers’ Association and the Leeds Nonconformist Ministers’ Association June 1889.

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first book on the subject emanating from the Wesleyan Church, and the literary sign of a new religious era, it suggests the consideration of the general subject of Social Christianity. There is no need to set forth in detail the social questions of the time ; they are only too sadly familiar. Who has not brooded over, and felt baffled by, some of those problems with which Mr. Price Hughes so trenchantly deals? The troubled relations of Capital and Labour : their mutual and insensate hostility ; the small share of the fruit of his labour gained by the labourer ; the inordinate share often gained by the capitalist ; the condition of the criminal, unemployed, and lower labouring classes ; the congestion of the poorer parts of our great cities ; the separation of populations into East and West Ends, poverty hard by luxury, and, worse still, poverty 'hard by hate' ; the condition of the dwellings of the poor : the overcrowding and insanitation ; the sweating system ; the prevalence of drinking habits, of gambling and impurity ; the alienation of the people from the Churches,—these are the problems and evils which have long afflicted humane imaginations, and still confront us.

Now, the question for Christians is, What is to be the attitude of the Christian Church towards them? Is she to adopt any special attitude at all, or is she to leave them to legislators, economists, and social reformers, continuing only in her work of converting individual sinners and edifying individual saints? Is she to leave social questions severely alone?

Mr. Price Hughes demands a special attitude, maintaining that the Christian Church has been 'too selfishly individualistic,' to the great injury of modern society. Many others, both ministers and laymen, deny the need

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for any special attitude or method, maintaining that the sufficient, indeed, the only true, method is that of devoting exclusive attention to the spiritual conversion of individuals—refusing to give to industrial and social questions, as such, any attention at all.

The Scriptures, say these, know nothing of any other method, and only in this way did the early Church deal with the social evils of its time—slavery, for instance, being never directly attacked, but undermined and destroyed by changing the individual.

These oft-repeated statements need a little attention ; and, first, is not the practice of giving special attention to social questions, of dealing with general social evils, to be found in the Scriptures? A most cursory glance reveals that it is, and that it is to be found in both Testaments. In the Old Testament, the social method positively preponderates. The whole of it is a record of God's dealings with a nation as such, rather than with the individuals of that nation. Moses presents the constructive social method, and the prophets the destructive or critical—the one avoiding or preventing social evils, and the others denouncing and destroying them. In the New Testament, while the individual method predominates, the social method is far from being absent. Our Lord deals with, and condemns, Jerusalem and Capernaum as cities, and the Pharisees and Sadducees as classes. St. Paul writes his letters mostly to Christian communities, not individuals, and St. John warns the seven Churches of Asia.

Our Lord and His apostles then dealt, not only with evil in the individual, but also with evil generally, as existing in definite forms in societies, classes, and Churches. The social method is, therefore, plainly set

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forth in the New Testament. But even if it were not, that would not close the question. If the Spirit of the living Christ guides His Church, new methods will arise, of which the apostolic and early Church never dreamt—new methods to meet the needs of ever-changing human society.

‘But what of the attitude of the early Church towards slavery? It was never denounced as such; it was dealt with indirectly, by the individual method.’ The reply to this oft-repeated objection is manifold. Abstract right demanded that Christianity should have declared definitely against slavery, yet it did not. Why? First, because, as the history of the Church reveals, God works by human means, and the early Christians received slavery as a matter of course, being unable to conceive society apart from it; they did not yet understand to what extent the truth was to make men free. Second, had they desired to abolish slavery, they were powerless. A despised, persecuted, numerically small, and socially insignificant party in the State, they were in no position immediately to overturn society and relay its foundations, or even to root out at once widespread evils. They could only deal with them by the slow, and not always sure, method of the reform of the individual. That this method is not always sure may be seen in the fact that the birth and growth of Christianity did not suffice to save the Roman Empire. The work of converting individuals was too slow a process—there were too few righteous men to save the State. When, at the last, the Christian Emperors began to deal with slavery and other social evils, by the social method of special action, their drastic reforms came too late—moral cancer had reached the vitals of Roman society.

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The individual method failed to save the old Roman Empire, and the social method was applied too late. In addition to all this, the first Christians, in their exultant other-worldliness and their constant expectation of Christ's coming again in their lifetime, would have been indifferent to the evils of slavery even had they realized them. With that Second Coming ever before them, and their new and vivid hope of the advent of 'the kingdom of heaven,' they manifested a really sublime indifference to human ills of every kind, except in the way of temporary amelioration. The very same ideas to-day lead some Christians calmly to tolerate preventable evils as unimportant, penal, or disciplinary.

The early Church's attitude towards slavery, then, can form no precedent for the Christian Church of to-day. As a matter of fact, its method failed; for, although it greatly modified it, in one or other form slavery has existed right up to the present day. The Christian Church is now in a very different position. In the presence of social evils of many kinds, and especially of the virtual slavery of multitudes of the industrial population, the duty of the Christian Church should surely be clear. Placed in the midst of a society which is named after Christ—Christendom—which historically owes, not only its civilization, but probably its very existence to the Church, that Church naturally has, when she chooses to exert it, a powerful moral and political influence. Understanding, better than the early Church could do, the full import of the great Christian principles of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, the Church of to-day is criminal if she acts solely according to the precedent of her former feeble and socially-helpless self. Whilst

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she may long for some of the innocence and enthusiasm and ethical purity of those first ages, yet she cannot despise the wisdom which succeeding ages have brought her.

It is a common contention, as against Social Christianity, that society is simply a gathering of individuals, and that to save society you have nothing to do but to save the individuals. It does not dawn upon some Christian men's minds that many individuals never can be saved until society itself is; that, after all, there is a social conscience as well as an individual one. Schleiermacher, Comte, Herbert Spencer, and many other philosophers and sociologists, have familiarized most thinking men with the conception that society is a living organism, having a life of its own, different from and in addition to that of the individuals who compose it; that it resembles an organic compound more than a mechanical mixture. Christians who read the New Testament teaching concerning the Church—that it is a corporate body, of which individual Christians are the members and Christ the Head, that it is quickened into a living whole by that Head—ought not to be the last to rise to the conception of human society as something more than a mere conglomeration of individuals. To them, the solidarity of the human race and the possession by human societies of a common consciousness and a common conscience ought not to be thought a thing incredible. The Church has a vivid consciousness of itself as a real though mysterious entity, and Christians devote much thought to the Church as such, not deeming it enough to deal only with the individual members. Surely, then, the Church should occupy herself with the salvation of society as such. Christians talk much of

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'the world,' which they oppose to 'the Church' as another mystical but real entity. Surely they ought to concern themselves as much with human society as a whole as they do with 'the world' and 'the Church' as wholes.

A very practical and plausible objection to Social Christianity is that it diverts the Church from purely spiritual work; that, by engrossing her in secularities it both dissipates her energies and lowers her tone. It is urged that the Christian Church has enough, and more than enough, to do, in a materialistic age, to keep alive in men a sense of God and things invisible and eternal, without wearing and wasting herself in advocating and working social reforms. She will serve society best, it is said, by preserving her 'other-worldliness' despite the sneers of those who, by their very sneers, evince their need of her ministries. This is a forcible objection. There is a danger of the Church to-day endeavouring too much, and trying too ambitiously to make the best of both worlds, the material and the spiritual. The danger is real that the Church, by becoming a sort of 'universal provider' for the people, may also become materialized, or, so to speak, Marthalized, and neglect the needful sitting at the Master's feet. It would indeed be a calamity to this generation if the Christian Church failed to bear her witness to things eternal and invisible. The ideal undoubtedly is that the Church should confine herself to fostering the spiritual life of men, instructing and quickening the conscience, declaring social duties, and pointing out social perils and evils, leaving it to Christian individuals and to Christian societies to establish and work, on neutral ground, and upon business principles, the different social organizations and movements

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needed for the people. The work would be more effectively done, inasmuch as the Church's efforts often fail to reach those who most need them, because they suspect an intention to proselytize or to sermonize. The Church would then be left free for the work of supplying the necessary instruction and motive power, and would be saved from the danger of becoming 'careful and troubled about many things.'

But at present much of this work is pioneer work, and must be done by the Christian Church, or left undone. The existence of moral and spiritual peril is no reason for shrinking from a plain duty. Let it but be made clear that it is a duty, and then the Church must guard her spirituality the more jealously, bracing herself up for the increased demand made upon her, strong in the strength which her Lord supplies. Such social work, undertaken as object-lessons to the community, may really enhance her spirituality, by casting her more upon God in faith and prayer; and her serviceableness, by increasing her social value to the community. The multiplication of relationships always increases moral peril, but it also increases moral possibility. The Church must become social without becoming secularized, and then she will win the reward of becoming much more highly developed, more highly moralized, and more socially efficient.

The greatest justification of Social Christianity is the fact that social questions are at bottom moral questions, and, therefore, well within the Church's province. Political economy itself is now perceived to be not only a science, but also a branch of ethics. Such economists as Bagehot, Jevons, Cairnes, Thornton, Ingram, Cliffe-Leslie, Walker, Bowen, Roscher, Wagner, Schäffle,



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Brentano, Baernreither, and Gneist, agree that an ethical element enters largely into all these questions. There is need thus to cite scientific authorities; those whose business it is to study ethical and religious questions ought to be sufficient authorities upon such a subject, but their judgement upon the presence or absence of the ethical element in these matters is frequently discounted as interested.

Mr. Frederic Harrison has gone so far as to say that economic science has done its best and its worst with social problems, and that now moral teachers must step in. If this be so—and it demonstrably is—the Christian Church cannot remain silent; if she did, the very stones would cry out against her. The hopelessness and misery of the masses, so far as they are caused by a commercial and industrial system of fierce competition, should occupy the attention, not only of statesmen and economists, but also of the Church, in order that competition may at least become fairer and more equal, less grasping and selfish. It is hers, by all consent, to deal with the drinking habits, the immorality and impurity, and the thriftlessness of the people; therefore it is also hers to deal with the cause of those evils, whether it be innate viciousness or, as it sometimes is, the grasping selfishness of large capitalists and shareholders, who keep down especially unskilled labour, and largely induce its recklessness, misery, and vice.

These problems are the particular business of the Christian Church, and should not be left to amateur and irresponsible moralists. They are not to be solved by the quixotic, though chivalrous, labours of a few isolated individuals or societies. A new public conscience needs forming, and this, as it is the business

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of, so only can it be accomplished by, the labours of the whole Christian Church, through her teachers, preachers, and writers.

Mr. Price Hughes affirms that the working men of modern Europe are alienated from the Church, if not from Christianity. Why is this? In Catholic countries, like France and Italy, they are alienated because the Church rather hindered than helped them in obtaining their political and social liberties. That they are not alienated in Catholic Ireland is due to the fact that the Catholic Church there, rightly or wrongly, has identified herself with the cause of the people. The emancipation of the individual, which took place religiously at the Reformation, and politically at the French Revolution, largely alienated the people from the Roman Catholic Church in the countries concerned. The Protestant Churches of Germany and England afterwards lost the people by their lack of sympathy with them, shown in suffering the exercise of individual liberty by the strong to proceed to such lengths that it became anti-social.

In England it culminated in a great industrial system, concerning which the German economist Baernreither declares that between 1832 and 1848 'the modern history of the West records, perhaps, no greater plundering of man by man than that which was then committed against a large portion of the English working class.' That exploitation of the working classes of England, which, alas! did not first begin then, was suffered to proceed without a protest from, and probably without even the consciousness of, the Christian Church. F. D. Maurice, Kingsley, and a few others, laboured almost alone and almost too late.

Then came in the era of Free Trade, which led

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amongst other less doubtful things, to almost unlimited competition ; buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest became a sacred principle even when flesh and blood in the form of human labour were bought and sold. This largely neutralized the benefits of Free Trade to the working classes, until skilled labour protected itself by association, with little or no countenance from the Christian Church, as such, and less elsewhere. Unskilled labour is still at the mercy of a selfish and relentless competition. What wonder, then, that the people are alienated from the Churches, which, despite their Founder, their creed, and their own past, have been controlled in the main by landowners, capitalists, and employers of labour ! What wonder when new movements for social reform have arisen, that they have been in form, and often in spirit, either anti-Christian or non-Christian !

The only hopeful sign is that the Christian Churches of Europe, both Catholic and Protestant, are becoming conscious of their past errors, and are beginning to arouse themselves. The cause of their awakening indeed—the political uprising of the people in their own economic and social interest—reflects no great credit upon those Churches.

But something must be done. Europe, after a thousand years of Christianity, is in a most unsatisfactory state. As Mr. Frederic Harrison has truly said, Christianity has not been hitherto a success as the morality of nations. He affirms that Christianity does nothing effectually to stop international jealousies or promote the brotherhood of nations, to reduce the number of men in arms or check the warlike spirit, to diminish the social warfare of classes and the selfishness

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of wealth. The truth of the sad indictment must be admitted. Where Mr. Harrison errs is not here ; not in his historical narrative, but in his historical deductions. He regards the defect as inherent in Christianity—that it is incapable of becoming the morality of nations and classes—whereas the defect is not inherent in Christianity ; the defect is in the Churches, for the treasure is in earthen vessels. But the one hopeful sign of the times, and the promise of a falsification of all Positivist prognostications of the decline and fall of Christianity, is the growing consciousness amongst the Churches of their fault and defect, and their endeavours to amend.

PART II  
HISTORICAL



I  
GERMAN  
SOCIALISM





## I

### GERMAN SOCIALISM

More than once it has been said to me in the factory, in so many words, What Jesus Christ has been in the past, Bebel and Liebknecht will be in the future.—PASTOR GÖHRE.

THE Germans have been slower in their development than most of the great nations of Europe, but they have long since made up for the lateness of their arrival upon the scene. Since the sixteenth century they have been in the front rank, both in thought and action. To German thinkers and German scholars we owe much of our modern progress in every department of human thought—in theology, in philosophy, in history, and in science. To Germans, also, we owe much in the great modern movement towards the completion of human emancipation, viz. in the movement for economic emancipation. As the Germans, in the sixteenth century, inaugurated the era of Individualism by their Protestantism, so, in the nineteenth century, they have inaugurated the era of Association by their Socialism. They originated neither of these eras, but they have practically inaugurated both.

John Wyclif, Hus of Bohemia, and Jerome of Prague, all preceded Martin Luther, but it was under

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Luther that the Reformation became an irresistible historical movement for the moral, mental, and finally political emancipation of the individual. Socialism did not originate with the Germans—they were too late in their industrial development for that—it originated in England and France; but under German influence Socialism has for the first time assumed scientific form as an elaborate economic theory, and attained world-wide notoriety and influence. As Germany profoundly modified the Europe of the past by its Protestantism of the sixteenth century, its philosophy of the eighteenth, its science and its militarism of the nineteenth, so, by its Socialism, will it modify the Europe of the future—the Europe of the twentieth century. It is therefore well worth while to study German Socialism.

The theory of German Socialism is now well known, having become international property. That theory in brief is, that modern Capitalism, which is a comparatively recent development of the great industrial movement, by means of the wages system and the 'free' labour market, aided also by the presence there of a surplus army of labour—the unemployed—manages, by the appropriation of 'surplus value,' to deprive the workers of the product of their labours. From this comes all our woe—the double-headed hydra of bloated Capitalism and bleached Proletarianism, an increasingly rich army of capitalists on the one side, and an increasingly wretched army of workers on the other. But, according to the German Socialists, deliverance lies in the very success of Capitalism—by giving it rope enough it will hang itself. It will so mass in its own hands the instruments of production and distribution—land, machinery, railways, &c., that the expropriated community—dis-

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ciplined, educated, and drilled by Capitalism itself—will finally rise, in some countries peacefully, in others violently, and ‘expropriate the expropriators,’ or, in other words, put the community in possession of the land and the remaining instruments of production and distribution. Private property in these will then be no more, and production will be undertaken by the people for the people—no longer by the workers for the capitalists. The legal, religious, and political emancipation of the labourer will then be completed by his economic emancipation ; until then his moral and political ‘freedom’ is more in fancy than in fact, is more a bane than a boon. This is the theory of German Socialism.

The German father of this theory was Rodbertus, a Prussian landowner and lawyer, born in 1805. Rodbertus was well versed in orthodox political economy ; he accepted Adam Smith’s doctrine of labour as the source of value, and Ricardo’s iron law of wages—doctrines which, consciously or unconsciously, had been formulated in the interests of Capital ; these he reiterated, in a work published in 1842, in the interests of Labour, and there elaborated his theory of scientific Socialism. Rodbertus brought to his study and his theory a vast amount of legal and economic knowledge, and also, as a landowner and agriculturist, much practical experience. Although his theory was revolutionary, he himself was not a revolutionist. He deprecated the union of Socialism with politics. He was intensely loyal both to the constitution and the monarchy. He desired to see the Prussian king a social reformer. He was for peaceful and gradual methods of reform, and calculated that it would take five hundred years to realize his socialistic state. Rodbertus wrote before his time—his economic theories

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were almost still-born ; indeed, their merits have been but recently recognized. For long they showed no signs of life, until some twenty years later, two men of genius arose in Germany, who began to expound the same ideas more practically and more powerfully : these were Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx. In the speeches and writings of these great men the same economic ideas reappeared, Lassalle emphasizing the small share of the product which goes to the labourer through the supposed operation of the iron law of wages, whereby wages are kept down to a mere subsistence-point, and Marx emphasizing the large share which goes to the capitalist, by his supposed appropriation of surplus value. In other words, Lassalle based his criticism of the industrial system upon Ricardo's wages doctrine, and Marx based his upon Adam Smith's labour doctrine. Lassalle and Marx have recently been charged with 'exploiting' Rodbertus and robbing him of his 'surplus value.' But, while both were undoubtedly familiar with the writings of Rodbertus, they both greatly enriched and advanced the theory of scientific Socialism, and practically it owed everything to them. Lassalle and Karl Marx were men of genius and learning ; scholars of German thoroughness, steeped in philosophical and economic lore ; both were masterly economic critics and brilliant men of action. Justice is only being tardily done to that pioneer thinker, Rodbertus, but there is no need to depreciate the services of Lassalle and Marx in the cause of modern Socialism. These can never be exaggerated.

Lassalle was born in 1825, and died in a duel in 1864 ; but his short, brilliant, reckless, and romantic life sufficed for him to originate the Social-Democratic Party amongst the working men of Germany—a party which now counts

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three millions and a quarter votes in the German Empire, and its forty-three members of the Reichstag. Lassalle was as brilliant an agitator and organizer as he was a thinker, critic, and orator. He it was who first made theoretic Socialism in Germany practical, by bringing it into the political sphere as an organized political party. He accomplished this by his masterly criticisms of the prevailing industrial system and the orthodox economy before audiences of working men in Leipsic and other places. Lassalle came into contact at this time with Bismarck, who, impressed by Lassalle's personality, arguments, and influence, began, not long after his death, the era of State Socialism in Germany. Hence Lassalle may be said to have formed the Social-Democratic Party, and to have indirectly established that State Socialism which, under Bismarck and the present German Emperor, has secured to the German workman an advanced Factory Act, an insurance on his life, compensation for accident, a pension for his old age, the organization of employment, and other undreamt-of privileges.

Karl Marx's contributions to German Socialism are, if possible, even more important than Lassalle's. He it was who gave it its standard economic work, and who founded International Socialism. Born at Treves in 1816, he took part in the Revolution of 1848, and then became a life-long exile, living in England nearly thirty years. Here he studied its advanced industrial system, and gave expression to his views in the economic treatise entitled *Capital*. It is called 'the working man's Bible,' though we fear very few working men—even Germans—ever read it. This great work is a most masterly criticism of Capitalism in the light of Socialistic theories and assumptions; it is more destructive than constructive,

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tracing the rise and progress of Capitalism as a great historic movement, sure to arise and equally sure to perish. It is a wonderful book, full of genuine learning, passion, and love of the people, however much marred by materialistic philosophy, Hegelian jargon, and economic errors. The Marxian or international school of Socialism is now in the ascendant in Germany. Lassalle was essentially national, and after his death the Social-Democratic Party became disorganized, through the contentions of the two sections—the section which was for keeping Socialism national, and the section which was for making it international. Finally, the latter—the Marxian—prevailed, and the party was united for years, under the leadership of the workman Bebel, the journalist Liebknecht, and the capitalist and ex-employer Singer, in North Germany, and Auer and Grillenburger in South Germany, and also Vollmar, Kautsky and Bernstein. The motto of German Socialism to-day is, ‘Proletarians of all nations, unite!’

Lassalle and Marx have not only been the means of forming a great political party in the German Empire pledged to Socialism, of indirectly creating State Socialism, and of establishing the once-dreaded International, and so making German Socialism the creed of a large portion of the workmen of Europe, and even of America and England, but they have, with Rodbertus, been the means of revolutionizing political economy. These great Socialists riddled the orthodox science with their criticisms, and have forced it to reconsider and modify or abandon many of its positions. They have shown that as industrialism is an historical movement, and therefore subject to the law of development, political economy can never be final in its doctrines—at least,

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save in a very abstract way ; in other words, it must be progressive. They have thus taught political economists to be historical. But they have done more than this : they have taught them to be human and ethical. This they have done by criticizing and expounding the science from the standpoint of the labourer, and not merely from that of wealth ; by restating it in the interests of the human being, the chief factor in it, and that in a spirit of passionate sympathy with the workman. The effect of this has been seen in the German universities, in the rise there of a new school of political economy—the Katheder Socialists, or Socialists of the Chair, the chief ornaments of which have been Professors Roscher, Wagner, and Schäffle. This school, whilst not Socialist in theory, is at once historical, ethical, and humane in its economic investigations and laws, and has been the ‘guide, philosopher, and friend’ of the State Socialism of Prince Bismarck and his Imperial masters.





II  
FERDINAND  
LASSALLE



## II

### FERDINAND LASSALLE

To have as many needs as possible, but to satisfy them in a respectable way, is the virtue of the present economic age.  
—LASSALLE.

THE figure of Ferdinand Lassalle is the most fascinating and romantic in the whole history of Socialism. The fact that he caught the artistic eye of George Meredith, who depicted him in the *Tragic Comedians*, is sufficient proof of this. But his career is interesting not only because of its romance, but also because of its importance, and deserves more extended attention.

In these days of modern Jew-baiting, or anti-Semitism, the services of Jews to the science of economics should not be forgotten. The Jews have not only been the money-lenders, usurers, and financiers of mediaeval and modern Europe, but in Ricardo, whose father was a Jew, they have given us one of the founders of the science of political economy; and in Lassalle and Karl Marx, both of Jewish parentage, they have given us the two great critics of that science and the founders of a new economic movement, the far-reaching influences of which cannot yet be foretold.

Lassalle was born at Breslau, in Germany, in 1825.

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Although greatly the junior of Rodbertus, and even of Marx, he was the first to run his career—a career both epoch-making and brilliant.

The son of a well-to-do tradesman, he studied at the Universities of Breslau and Berlin. His favourite subjects there were philology and philosophy, but he displayed great precociousness in every branch of learning. He was of striking and handsome presence, of charming manners and brilliant conversational powers, and withal a dandy in his dress. He soon became a favourite both in the haunts of men and in the boudoirs of women: of the men because of his wide knowledge, virile intellect, and keen debating powers; of women because of his gallantry and personal and social charm. Both Heine and Bismarck have borne testimony to Lassalle's remarkable ability. Heine, who met him in Paris in 1846, wrote of him as 'a young man of most remarkable intellectual gifts. With the most thorough erudition, with the widest learning, with the greatest penetration which I have ever known, and with the richest gifts of exposition, he combines an energy of will and a capacity for action which astonishes me.' The bitter-tongued Heine seldom spoke in such high praise of any contemporary. When Lassalle's brilliant, meteor-like career flared to its close, Heine, in a Hebrew mood, crowned his praise by declaring him 'the Messiah of the nineteenth century.' Bismarck, speaking in the Reichstag, in 1878, of some interviews Lassalle had had with him, exclaimed that 'he was one of the most intellectual and gifted men with whom I ever had intercourse.'

Lassalle's public career both opens and closes chivalrously—he both appears and disappears as the champion of women. When twenty-one, he met in the drawing-

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rooms of Breslau the interesting and unfortunate Countess Hatzfeldt. She was the victim of the unfaithfulness and brutality of her husband, a rich German count, from whom she was separated, and who now sought to reduce her to beggary and to rob her of her children. Her wrongs aroused Lassalle's sympathy; he resolved to become her champion. With characteristic ardour and ability he mastered the necessary legal knowledge, and, after pursuing the count with lawsuits for eight years and through thirty-six tribunals, he finally brought the villain to his knees, and wrung from him for the countess the charge of her children and a large fortune. This romantic incident, however, cast an air of moral suspicion over his reputation. Society refused to believe that the affection of this brilliant youth for the handsome countess of forty was purely Platonic, especially when it became known that he had accepted from her an annuity of some £600 or £700.

But whatever damage was thus done at the outset of his career to his moral reputation, this legal experience stood Lassalle in good stead in his many subsequent prosecutions. So much so that he rather rejoiced in them, and made the prison-dock his forum. These legal struggles also developed his talents, and made him at a very early age one of the most brilliant debaters, expositors, and orators in Germany. In the midst of the Hatzfeldt lawsuit the revolution of 1848 broke out. Into this Lassalle at once threw himself, on the Republican side, and, for some illegal act at Düsseldorf, suffered six months' imprisonment.

At the conclusion of the Hatzfeldt case in 1856, he wrote and published a philosophic book on *Heraclitus*, from an Hegelian standpoint, for Lassalle belonged to

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the young Hegelian School, the Left—that school which interpreted Hegel in a naturalistic, humanistic, materialistic way. This book at once gained him a high place in learned circles, as did also another book, published in 1861, on the philosophy of law, entitled *The System of Acquired Rights*. This latter book was the result of his legal studies, and has received too little attention, for had Lassalle lived longer there is no doubt that the principles there laid down would have become prominent in his policy. The constitutional struggle, which began in 1862, when Bismarck became the minister of William I, brought Lassalle into the field of politics and began his Socialistic career. He had long given attention to economics, and was quite prepared with his theories—theories both new and startling to the general German public, but which he had obtained and thoroughly assimilated from Rodbertus and Marx, and the French and English Socialists and economists. He was already an adept in economic science, and an economic critic of the first order. After one or two skirmishes over questions of the hour, Lassalle opened the Socialistic era in Germany by a lecture given in the spring of 1862 before an artisans' association in Berlin, in which he dealt in a philosophic and historical way with the development of the State and society since the French Revolution. He arrived at the conclusion that, as the French Revolution of 1789 had inaugurated the era of the third estate—the *bourgeoisie*—so the revolution of 1848 had begun the era of the fourth estate—that of the common people, of humanity in general. The lecture was afterwards published, under the title of *The Workmen's Programme*.

He was prosecuted for these utterances, the copies of

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his lecture confiscated, and he himself fined ; but his brilliant defence in court greatly increased his popularity. The heads of the German working classes perceived that a new leader had arisen, and the Leipsic Workmen's Association invited him to state his views to them. This he did in the spring of 1863 in his famous *Open Letter*. This was followed by a congress of workmen's associations at Frankfort-on-Main, where 1,300 delegates assembled, and Lassalle advocated his Socialistic views—now so familiar, then so new and strange—against those of the Progressist Party which had till that hour held the allegiance of the German workers. Lassalle won a great victory—all save forty voting for his programme. From that hour Lassalle became a great agitator, journeying over Germany addressing workmen and forming associations. The battle waged hottest between Lassalle and Schulze-Delitzsch—an earnest politician and friend of the people, whose programme was 'Self-help by means of Co-operative Societies and People's Banks.' Lassalle attacked this movement with great energy ; the odds seemed all against him—the whole Progressist Party, the rank and file of the workmen, and the powers that be—but Lassalle won ; not at first, but finally. At first he seemed defeated, but finally, as all men know, the German working classes discarded Co-operation as a remedy for their grievances, and took up Socialism. Lassalle's great contention was that the working classes suffered as producers, not as consumers, and that any movement which was to really help them must put them in possession of the product or the means of production. This Socialism proposed to do. As a counteractive to Schulze-Delitzsch's co-operative societies, Lassalle urged

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the formation of State workshops, in which the workers were to do productive work, the necessary capital being found by the State. These were no doubt suggested to Lassalle by Louis Blanc. Between the *ateliers nationaux* of the latter and the productive associations of the former there is no practical difference. The means Lassalle advocated for the attainment of this end was universal suffrage. He was unable to secure the co-operation of the veteran Rodbertus in his political venture, but, with a true instinct, Lassalle felt that mere economic abstractions would not attract the working classes—the proposals of Socialism must be something concrete and definite. He proposed a political campaign, with ‘Productive Associations and Universal Suffrage’ as battle-cry, and entered upon it. This was a brilliant success. Lassalle was hailed by the working men of Germany as a deliverer, and his journeys to and fro were like royal progresses. The towns he visited were *en fête*. His views took firm and quick hold of the German working men—that labour is the source of value; that, by the iron law of wages, whereby the workman only receives a subsistence wage, the major part of the product is filched from him; that Capitalism is an historic category to be superseded by Socialism—the possession by the community of the means of production and distribution.

But the labour through which Lassalle went in organizing the working classes, with their slowness (to his eyes) and their divisions, the hostility of the Government and of the middle and upper classes, and the many prosecutions which this involved, all told upon his constitution, and at last, after two years’ incessant agitation, in July 1864, worn out in mind and body,



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Lassalle retreated to Switzerland to recuperate. Here he met, at Rigi-Kaltbad, Helene von Dönniges, a young lady engaged to Count von Racowitz. He became enamoured of her, and stole her affections from the young count. Her parents interfered, removed her, and finally persuaded her to renounce Lassalle and be reconciled to Racowitz. Lassalle had all through played an unworthy part in exercising his great personal attractions upon a young and engaged girl; he now added to his folly by challenging Racowitz to a duel—he, the democrat who, when challenged to a duel in 1848 by a political enemy, declined on the ground that it was ‘barbaric.’ He insisted on the duel. It was fought with pistols on the morning of August 28, 1864, near Geneva. Racowitz got his shot away first, and mortally wounded Lassalle, who lingered two days in agony, and died with his hand in that of the Countess Hatzfeldt.

Thus ignominiously died Lassalle, the inaugurator of a new era, the first to bring Socialism within the political arena, the first State Socialist, the man who converted Bismarck to State Socialism, who converted Bishop von Ketteler, and thus won to the new movement, in a modified way, the German Government and the Roman Catholic Church. Thus ended the career, at the early age of thirty-nine, of that great economic critic who riddled the orthodox economists with his criticisms, and indirectly brought into being the Socialism of the Chair, and who founded the great Social-Democratic Party in Germany, which is now such a vast and threatening power. Most truly descriptive of him is Bernhard Becker’s epitaph: ‘Here lies Ferdinand Lassalle, thinker and fighter.’ The ‘Messiah of the nineteenth

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century' Heine named him, and such the German working classes regard him. August 31 is kept as his death-day with great solemnity and celebration. Some, indeed, positively refuse to believe in his death, but await in hope his return from retirement, to the dismay of the enemies of the working classes, and the final triumph of Socialism.

III  
KARL MARX'S  
'CAPITAL'



### III

## KARL MARX'S 'CAPITAL' <sup>1</sup>

The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.—MARX.

NOTHING angers the Socialist so much as the frequency with which his name is claimed by others. It is the commonest occurrence for a minister, or a politician, after advocating some mild measure of social amelioration, to perorate grandiloquently thus: 'If this is Socialism—then I am a Socialist!' All sorts and conditions of men, from Social sentimentalists to State interventionists, take to themselves this title, without the least right to it. The well-meaning 'Christian Socialist,' who chafes at the tyranny of Capital and champions Labour; who exhorts the employer to be just and pitiful, and invokes State aid when he will be neither the one nor the other—he has nothing of the Socialist about him but the name. That sagacious politician the State Socialist, who, discovering the social trend of democratic politics, casts a sop to Cerberus in the way of State insurance and pensions—he again, to the scientific Socialist, is nothing but a fraud.

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Chester Nonconformist Ministers' Association, June 1893.

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Socialism is a great economic theory, critical and constructive, elaborated by men who, whatever their prejudices and sympathies, were men of economic genius. Socialism proper, therefore, is neither a tendency nor a sentiment, but a clearly defined and logically formulated theory—a fit subject for the careful consideration of economists and men of intelligence.

The Jewish race which has given us our great financiers—those modern Shylocks who, with Jacob-like instincts, have taught barren money to breed—has given us not only the bane, but also the antidote, viz. the Socialists. There is a social Nemesis in this which satisfies the mind. Although German Jews by birth, intellectually both Lassalle and Marx were the products of the French Revolution and of Hegel's philosophy. They became the founders of 'the International,' and of European Socialism.

Lassalle was an economic free-lance, brilliant and versatile—the antipodes of the steady and systematic Marx. Lassalle had hours of insight and gleams of genius. He flashed like a meteor through the economic sky, quickly disappearing from view; not, however, until he had disturbed the whole economic atmosphere of Germany. His economic criticisms, by the admissions of the learned 'Socialists of the Chair,' completely changed the character of German economic science.

Karl Marx lived a refugee in England for thirty years. He died in Paris in 1883, aged sixty-five. When in this country Marx made a profound study of the English industrial system, and in 1867 published, in Germany, his *Das Capital*, a critical analysis of capitalistic production. It is a great and epoch-making work, which has only recently been reckoned with by the economic

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world. It is characteristically German in its terminology and tone—heavy, cumbrous, technical, and philosophical. It is therefore abstruse, and both exhaustive and exhausting. There is, as the Germans would say, much 'mind-stuff' in it.

But, whatever its difficulties, it has leavened the masses of Germany. The proof of this may be seen in the mighty and disconcerting Socialist vote now existing in the German Empire.

That Socialism was predestined to make some way even in England was evident to those who knew that Karl Marx's *Capital* was a criticism of the modern industrial system as expounded by English economists and exemplified in English industrial society. That it was so was due, not to the chance that Marx was a political exile in England, a 'chiel amang us takin' notes,' but to the fact that the science of political economy was born in England, and that here industry and commerce were more highly developed and organized than anywhere else. A scientific student, such as Marx, must begin in England. Hence his criticisms and theories, if of any value, although published in Germany, were destined, sooner or later, to be heard of in England. They have been heard of in England, and very much of the Socialist literature with which we are now deluged is nothing but a doling out or *réchauffé* of Karl Marx's *Capital*.

*Capital* is, indeed, the very charter of Labour. It is a mine of theories, arguments, criticisms, and facts—a very arsenal of arms for the workman. Though repellent in form and technical in phrase, it is now constantly reproduced and popularized by practised literary hands. All that is here attempted is, not a detailed analysis or criticism of Marx's *Capital*, but simply a brief and

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popular summary of his doctrines, in order that those who have neither leisure nor inclination to read the ponderous tome may have some accurate idea of the main trend of that remarkable work.

Marx takes the findings of the great orthodox economist Ricardo, and bases his work upon them. It is the irony of economic history that so capitalistic an economist as Ricardo should have been made to play so revolutionary a part in it. His famous economic laws have been put to uses that he little dreamt of, and have been made the subject of deductions which, famous deducer as he himself was, would have horrified him. Henry George deduced from the Ricardian law of rent the iniquity of private property in land. Lassalle deduced from the Ricardian 'iron' law of wages, and Marx from the Ricardian law of value, the iniquity of private property at all—or at least in any of the instruments of production and distribution.

Karl Marx's first and fundamental doctrine in *Capital* is, that it is labour which constitutes or creates exchange-value. He asserts that a commodity is nothing but congealed labour, or, to quote him, 'a mere homogeneous congelation of undifferentiated human labour.' It is only fair to Marx to point out, in view of many criticisms which have been passed upon this phrase, that by labour as the source of value he means labour under certain necessary social conditions. He is not so simple as to say, as some very reputable critics assume, that it is any labour, skilled or unskilled, quick or slow, useful or not, which constitutes the exchange-value of products. Marx is very careful to declare that value-creating labour must be—to use his own phrases—both 'socially useful' and 'socially necessary' labour. 'The exchange-value of a



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commodity,' Marx says, 'is to be measured by the amount of socially necessary labour put into it. The labour-time socially necessary is that required to produce an article under the normal conditions of production, and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time.' In another place Marx declares that 'if a thing is useless, so is the labour contained in it—the labour does not count as labour, and therefore creates no value.' Nothing can be more explicit than this, or than the following words: 'The labour spent upon them' (commodities) 'counts effectually only in so far as it is spent in a form that is useful for others.' Hence it is unfair to represent Marx as teaching that labour of any sort creates value. Marx's labour-doctrine of value, then, is that it is labour which is socially useful and socially necessary, which creates value in exchange. But, having seen this much, it is marvellous that he did not see also that social demand must therefore be an integral element in value.

He next proceeds to define and establish his *law of surplus value*. Marx's great indictment against the modern system of capitalistic production is that it is a scientific system of robbery—the robbery of the weak by the strong, of the poor by the rich—and that it proceeds by the appropriation of what he calls 'surplus value.' The wage-worker, Marx says, not only reproduces the value of his wages, but produces more value besides. This surplus value is either all kept by the capitalist or shared with the landlord and manager in the three historic forms of interest, rent, and profit.

In order to accomplish this financial feat, the capitalist needs something beside constant capital—i.e. the means of production: money, raw material, machinery, &c.

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These only reproduce themselves in the form of exchange-values, and there can be no gain in the exchange of equivalents ; only what is put in can come out. The capitalist needs another kind of capital—variable capital. He needs something which has the unique faculty of being able to do more than merely reproduce itself. This he finds in labour-power—labour-power for sale in the market in the person of the so-called 'free' labourer, and under the protecting aegis of the wages system. By this means the capitalist secures the services of the labourer for the whole working-day for the mere wages of subsistence—wages sufficient, that is, for the support of the labourer and his family, or, to put it in the abstract, sufficient for the support and reproduction of labour-power. The capitalist is, therefore, legally able to make a profit upon the transaction, obtaining several hours' labour per diem for nothing. This device the capitalists, aided by the economists, have steadily worked up into a system, and, being in possession of wealth, education, Parliament, and power, have had very little trouble in perfecting it. As the result, we have the 'free' labourer standing in the market divorced from the land and from all the instruments of production. He stands there offering for sale his only commodity, viz. his labour-power. He cannot sell himself—that is not legal, it is not moral—he lives in the era of freedom. He now has the privilege of selling his power to labour under the enlightened régime of 'free contract' and 'free competition,' in which he is so far free that he must either sell his labour-power to a capitalist, who gives him the market-wage, which, be it remembered, is only the wages of subsistence—subsistence measured sometimes by a high,

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more often a low, standard of civilization—or else starve. The labourer can reproduce the value of his wages, say, with five hours' labour, but he is obliged to contract—to 'freely' contract—to work twelve or ten hours for the capitalist, so that the value created by him in the remaining seven or five hours is taken by the said capitalist. Marx calculates that the labourer is deprived, upon the average, of three-fifths of the product of his labour under the capitalist system of industry. 'Profit consists of labour put into material for which the labourer has not been paid.' Profit is appropriated surplus labour—crystallized unpaid labour. No wonder, then, says Marx, that the capitalists cry out for 'freedom of contract' and 'a free labour-market.' 'Licence they mean when they cry liberty!'

The genesis of the 'free' labourer and his perpetuation and increase lead Marx into a long historical study, and finally to another of his great doctrines.

In a terrible narrative, based on past history and the unimpeachable testimony of modern Blue-books, Marx shows how it came to pass that the labourer, landless and toolless, stands to-day too often idle in the marketplace, with nothing to sell but his labour-power—that product of human intelligence, feeling, and will. The divorce of the labourer from the land took place soon after the break-up of feudalism, by the system of rack-renting, land-enclosures, and dispossessions of communal rights. Through these injustices, perpetrated particularly in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the labourers were cast upon the towns. The consequent congestion of the towns with landless men, accompanied by political causes, broke down in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the guild system of industry, and

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completed the ruin of the English working classes by obliterating the mediaeval artisan. The beginning of the sixteenth century saw, through geographical discovery and through conquest, the beginnings of a world-embracing commerce and a world-embracing market—in a word, the rise of Capitalism—a new thing in the economic history of man. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the growth and the decline of domestic industry—the system of home handicrafts. During those centuries, though landless, the workman gradually gained the instruments of production, and united in his own person capitalist and labourer. This, however, was only temporary. With the utilization of water-power, and still more with the invention of steam-power, came the transition from the small to the large industry. The invention of machinery, and the perfecting of the factory system, completed the dispossession of the labourer from the instruments of production. He now becomes the 'free' labourer—left in the forlorn condition before mentioned, with only his labour-power for sale to the highest, or, more correctly, to the lowest, bidder—left to the tender mercies of the law of supply and demand and the profitmonger.

At this point emerges the third leading doctrine of Karl Marx—his *law of surplus population*.

The preceding dispossessions—to call them by a polite name—of the labourer from his land and from his instruments of production not only provided capitalist production with the 'free' labourer, without whom profit is impossible, but they did something more. The congestions of the towns by the influx of the agricultural refugees expelled from the land; the displacement of men by machinery; the dislocations, depressions, crises,

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changes and fluctuations of the modern productive system, and many other things, helped on the formation of a great surplus population, euphoniously called an industrial army of reserve. The unemployed, always clamouring at the gate of Capital for bread, are, in Marx's opinion, an inevitable, a logical result of the capitalist system—necessary, indeed, to its success. Without this competition between labourers, wages could not be kept at a profitable level; the competition between capitalists for trade is keen enough, without increasing it by adding competition between them for labour. Labour must be abundant, and, fortunately for the capitalist if not for the workman, by the above causes it becomes abundant.

The competition which results between the super-abundant labourers for work keeps wages down in the interest of surplus value and profits. History records, in letters of blood and fire, the success of Capital in securing low wages and long hours. Without the army of the unemployed it would not pay the capitalist to starve and overwork the labourer. A slave must be well fed, and not overworked—so too must a horse—otherwise they will die, and be costly to replace. But with the 'free' labourer, the 'army of reserve' being in the rear, starvation and overwork not only do not matter, but are positively profitable! The 'free' labourers may die off like flies under the rise and progress of Capitalism, but there is a surplus supply of them, and all is well. There are plenty more clamouring at the gate to be let in and fed; human beings are, in this system, a drug in the market. That they breed and multiply like rabbits in their misery is a disadvantage only to themselves, as kind Mr. Clergyman Malthus once told them.

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Moneybags, that man of business and Bethels, considered Rev. Mr. Malthus's doctrines very profane, and quite contrary to Scripture, not to mention the fact that they were contrary to Moneybags' own commercial interests. A decline in the population would certainly have diminished his chances of extracting as much surplus value from the 'free' labourer. He therefore the more heartily banned this pernicious and unscriptural doctrine, and was shocked to think that a Christian clergyman, of all men, should have put these dangerous and immoral notions into the heads of the working classes—fortunately, they showed too much good sense to embrace them! Such, mildly expressed, is Marx's bitter irony in the matter of Malthus.

The progress of the system of capitalistic production, when left to itself, to its own laws and evolution, produced results so terrible at the end of the last and the beginning of this century that the cold records of even the Parliamentary Blue-books are appalling and cheek-blanching. Never in the history of Christendom was such oppression known, or such cruelty perpetrated. The community slowly became scandalized, and sheer humanity forced it to interfere with the natural workings of this brutal system. Hence the historical wrestle with the capitalists over the Factory Acts and other labour legislation.

But Capital evolves its own destruction. It has massed, organized, and drilled the labourers until at last they have obtained a sense of solidarity, and have begun to combine in their own interests. Trade unions arise with much difficulty, and slightly modify the situation; but they are quite unable to cope with the evils of the labourer's lot in presence of the surplus population. They try to deal with the evils of surplus population and

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surplus value; they endeavour to make certain trades close corporations, they limit production, they demand a standard wage, and they discourage speed and skill, to the damage of their own ability and honour. But this is, thinks Marx, an all too feeble endeavour to circumvent Capital by damaging the workman's producing powers. Capitalist production grows, despite every obstacle, until it becomes for ever impossible to put back the clock of time and revert to older and more primitive forms of production. Karl Marx predicted forty years ago the rise of modern industrialism, with its twenty-millionaires, its vast companies, its colossal organizations, its unions, its trusts, its syndicates. He saw in them the beginning of the end, when great organizations, controlling the necessities of life or of civilized existence, becoming the property of a few great capitalists, would dominate and alarm mankind. Then the majority, already drilled and organized by Capital itself, would arise and begin the era of socialized production—of production not by the many for the few, but by the many for themselves. Then will come to pass the 'expropriation of the expropriators.' His own words are: 'Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of Capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this, too, grows the revolt of the working class—a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of Capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with it and under it. Centralization of the means of

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production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.'

It will be seen from the foregoing that, while Karl Marx is mainly critical, he is also by implication constructive. The great wrong evolves a great right—evil begets good. The dispossession of the individual workman from the land and the instruments of production lead to an industrial system which at last makes possible the resumption of both the land and the instruments of production, not, indeed, by the individual, but by the community. Henceforth there will be no private property in these—the land, roads, railways, canals, telegraphs, steamships, and all tools and machines, will become public property, and will be worked by the community for the community.

Society is to be based upon labour, not upon wealth—upon honourable, healthful, universal labour. 'If any man will not work, neither shall he eat.' That such an ideal is reasonable is seen in the ease with which already, in the presence of a disaffected labour-market, some communities control and organize for public service, railways, postal services, telegraphs, gas and water works, tramways, the great war departments, and some branches of production and distribution in connexion with reformatories, prisons, and workhouses. Karl Marx did not speculate upon the means and details of this transition. He is content to deal with principles and tendencies. He regards industry as a vast development—indeed, was the first economist to study industry historically, and to apply to it the doctrine of evolution. The abolition of



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slavery and serfdom, according to Marx, released the workman from legal dependence, the Reformation from intellectual dependence, the French Revolution from political dependence, and Socialism will perfect the work by releasing him from economic dependence.

Karl Marx holds that the new era will be peacefully and legally inaugurated in England, but not elsewhere. He is not unwilling to invoke force ; evolution is quite compatible with revolution, for evolution proceeds by leaps and bounds at times, is marked by the sudden introduction of new factors, and makes unexpectedly new departures ; its law is progress by struggle and the survival of the fittest. He anticipates that when the hour is ripe, the force necessary in certain countries for the majority to dispossess the minority will not be great. No question of injustice arises with Marx over this expropriation ; to him it will be but the execution of a long-delayed act of justice to the workman. If asked, ' But these sheep—the hereditary capitalists—what have they done?' he would say that involuntary vicarious sacrifice is the law of life, and their consolation must be that they suffer for the good of society, as workmen, displaced by machinery, have been supposed to do in the past. It will, no doubt, be as much a comfort to one as to the other ; but certainly it will be the fulfilment of the law that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. If asked whether such a social revolution would not lower the standard of civilization, Marx would answer, Very likely, but so did the barbarian conquest of the Roman Empire. In that deluge literature, art, science, culture, refinement, and religion, all perished ; but who now regretted that ? Roman civilization has been replaced by another and by a higher civilization. Some would

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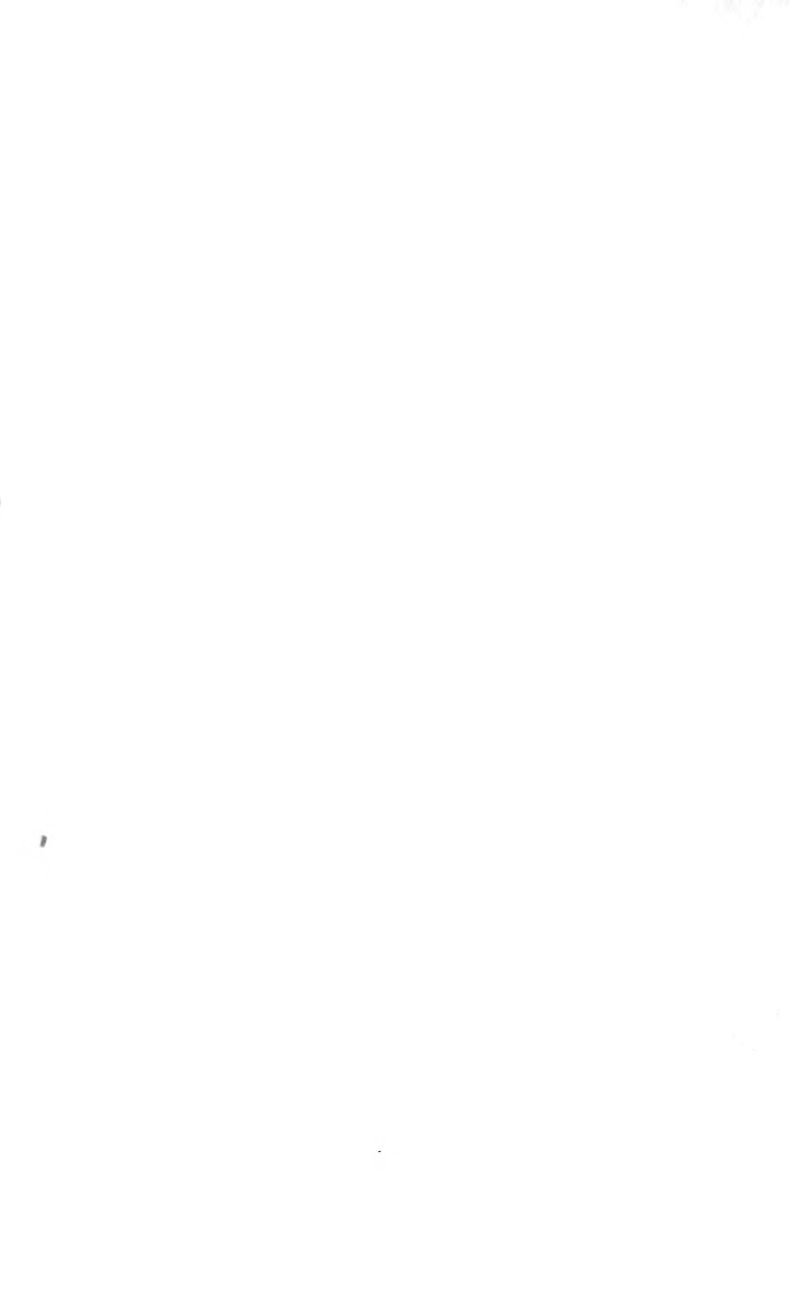
call the succeeding one Christian ; Marx calls it capitalistic, and maintains that the Socialistic civilization which is to succeed it, based as it will be upon justice and the real brotherhood of man, will approximate more closely to the ideal civilization than ever the capitalistic type has done.

In reading *Capital*, while annoyed by the Hegelian jargon and by the profanity which frequently mars it, as well as at Marx's false logic and crude theorizings, the reader cannot fail to be impressed by the new spirit which he introduces into political economy. In his hands not only does it become an historical science, which alone was of great service to modern society, but it becomes a humane science. Marx is rightly more concerned in his economic studies with men than with money, and he therefore regards political economy and production from the standpoint of the labourer, and not from that of wealth and profit. He does not deal with cold abstractions, but with living beings. He rightly holds that political economy is a science in which money and material values are quite inferior to men and morality. With Marx political economy does not proceed upon the cynical assumption that human nature is essentially selfish, and that man is a mere 'hand,' an attendant upon a machine, a mere shuttlecock, bandied to and fro in the interests of profit by the battledores of capital and the law of supply and demand.

With Marx, political economy studies production and exchange from the standpoint of justice, and not merely from that of wealth. Hence, in his hands it is no longer the 'dismal,' but the hopeful science, having for its object production by all for all—justice, co-operation, and material and moral prosperity, and therefore human

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happiness, following in its wake. Such an economy can awaken enthusiasm, and in its main purposes deserves to succeed. Such an economy, even though its theories be chimerical and quixotic, and it be stuffed full of economic heresies and fallacies, will evoke more passionate advocacy from young England than will the colder and apparently more correct political economy of the day, which ignores the human factor of its subject in favour of the material factor. If Karl Marx has been nothing else, he has been a great pioneer in the movement for the emancipation of the masses of Europe from economic slavery, and as such must be ever held in honour by all humane-minded men.



IV  
ENGLISH  
SOCIALISM



## IV

### ENGLISH SOCIALISM

At present she does not rule her wealth. She is simply a good England, but no divinity, or wise instructed soul.—EMERSON.

A SCORE of years or more ago no such thing as English Socialism existed or was supposed possible. What with Factory Acts, Free Trade, Reform Bills, Free Speech, and a Free Press, English industrial soil was deemed quite too well tilled to produce any such noxious weed. But although the very memory of it had died out, as a matter of fact Socialism, both the thing and the name, originated in England. As long ago as the seventeenth century John Locke had, in his *Treatise on Civil Government*, formulated the labour theory of value: 'It is labour, indeed, that puts the difference of value on everything' (book ii., chap. iii.). Socialism returned to England in the eighties from Germany; but Karl Marx, who formulated it afresh, lived long years in England, and, as we have seen, based his famous analysis of Capitalism upon English sources.

Long before Marx's day, Thomas Hodgkin had propounded pure Socialism in two anonymous pamphlets—*Labour Defended against Capital* (1825) and *The Natural and Artificial Rights of Property Contrasted* (1832).

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William Thompson, to whom Marx owed much, published in 1822 or 1824 a purely Socialistic work, entitled *An Enquiry into the Principle of the Distribution of Wealth*. These English writers were half a century before their time, as was also the first Socialist, Robert Owen. The Owenites were Socialists, and they gave to Socialism its world-wide name. In *The Poor Man's Guardian* (1835), Owen announced plainly the famous doctrine of 'surplus value.'

The Owenites constantly declared that, while the worker produces all the wealth, he is obliged to content himself with the meagre share necessary to support his existence, the surplus going to the capitalist. The word 'Socialism' was first used by the Owenites in the discussion which arose in 1835 in connexion with 'Owen's Association of all Classes of all Nations.' It was adopted by the French writer Reybaud, and through him gained currency on the Continent as the most suitable name for the new world-movement. So that while Socialism was unknown in England in the seventies, it had nevertheless originated here in the twenties, if not before. Its entire disappearance from England after the thirties is due to several causes—to the collapse of Owenism and Chartism, to the new Reform Bill of 1832, which put the middle classes in power, and led to legislation which, while it answered middle-class purposes, ameliorated also the condition of the working classes, viz. the Factory Acts and the Repeal of the Corn Laws.

The Socialism which failed both here and in France, mainly through the political triumph of the middle classes, took root in Germany, and made rapid strides ; it was reintroduced into England in a systematic form



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by those two Anglo-Germans, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Reintroduced in the late seventies, after the Franco-German War and the collapse of the French Commune and the International, it at first made but little progress. The first Socialist organization was the Social Democratic Federation, formed in 1884, which originally counted amongst its members Messrs. Hyndman, John Burns, William Morris, E. Aveling (a son-in-law of Marx), and Belfort Bax. Then came, as the result of a split, the short-lived Anarchist Socialist League, at the head of which was William Morris, and finally, though of independent origin, the Fabian Society. The first and last, with the Independent Labour Party, the creation of Keir Hardie and others, constitute now the three main Socialist bodies in England, with their three organs, *Justice*, *The Clarion*, and *The Labour Leader*. These bodies agree entirely in views and theory, but differ strongly on matters of policy, or, at least, have done so until very recently. The establishment of the Labour Representation Committee, a joint committee of Trade Unionists and of two of the three Socialist parties, for political purposes, and their success at the General Election of 1906, have brought into existence a Parliamentary Labour Party of some strength. The presence of that once famous Socialist, John Burns, in the Liberal Cabinet is most significant. All three Socialist societies are bent upon the overthrow of the present capitalistic system, and upon putting the producer in possession of the means of production and distribution. The Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party are Marxian, and the Fabian Society Opportunist.

The Fabian Society condemns physical force, and is for permeation and democratic constitutional means. The

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Social Democratic Federation has been bitterly hostile to the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour Party.

The Social Democrats come into collision with the other parties over policy, and over Socialist political economy. The Democrats swear by Karl Marx, and almost believe in the verbal inspiration of his *Capital*. Mr. Hyndman is ready to meet all comers in defence even of Marx's labour theory of value. The Fabians, on the other hand, especially, are up-to-date in political economy, and disavow many of Marx's premises based on Ricardian economists, whilst accepting his conclusions.

The Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party have been chiefly active amongst the working classes, their more thoroughgoing and violent programme naturally gaining the ear of disaffected workmen sooner than the moderate, reasonable, and gradual policy of the Fabians. Moreover, the Fabians were educated, were not manual labourers, but sprang from the middle classes, and were consequently viewed with suspicion by the hand-workers. The Fabians were at first most successful amongst the middle classes—their own classes—and also, till the rise of the Independent Labour Party, out-distanced the other Socialist bodies in success amongst the working classes, and in influence upon local and imperial politics.

The Fabian Society was formed in London in 1883, and was the outcome of a drawing-room discussion upon the condition of the people, due to the initiative of Thomas Davidson, the translator of *Rosmini*, who was passing through London on his way from America to Italy. The discussion revealed two schools of thought amongst those present—those who hoped for most from

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political and economic changes, and those who hoped most from ethical changes. The latter and least numerous school, led by Thomas Davidson, formed themselves into the New Fellowship, an ethical society which made little stir in the world, but had many very high-minded members. Its organ was entitled *Seed-time*. The more numerous school present at the above-named discussion started the Fabian Society, which had for its object the establishment of Socialism by political means. The policy of the Fabian Society is indicated by its name, and declared in the well-known *Fabian Essays on Socialism*, written by seven contributors, mostly undergraduates. Dr. Flint, in his book on *Socialism*, tries to use this name against the Fabian Society, apparently ignorant of the fact that the name was deliberately chosen from Roman history as indicative of the society's policy, after the Roman Dictator Fabius Maximus, the Cunctator, or 'Delayer,' whose policy is enshrined in these words upon the Fabian tracts: 'For the right moment you must wait, as Fabius did most patiently, when warring against Hannibal, though many censured his delays; but when the time comes you must strike hard, as Fabius did, or your waiting will be in vain and fruitless.'

The Fabians were at first viewed with suspicion and contempt by working-men Socialists; they were 'gentlemen' Socialists, 'kid-glove' Socialists, and their opportunist policy, their policy of 'permeation,' their readiness to work in harmony with Liberals and Radicals, and even Conservatives, when they were going their way, their willingness to accept anything which led at all in the direction of Collectivism, met with the most active abhorrence of Social Democrats and Anarchists. They were reviled as 'traitors' and 'week-knees,' and what

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not. Nevertheless, the Fabians gained influence, and gradually ceased to be mere drawing-room Socialists. Numbering amongst themselves many clever, educated men of the middle classes, they were able to expound Socialism as it had not been expounded before in England. The Fabian tracts, which now number 128, have become famous, and have been largely influential in forming the policy of the Progressive Party on the London County Council, which has exerted such a wide influence in London and the provinces upon municipal government.

The capture first of the London *Star*, through the influence of the Fabian Mr. Massingham, and then afterwards for a season of the London *Daily Chronicle*, vastly increased their fame. Their Press influence, however, was short-lived, and was superseded by that of Mr. R. Blatchford, the author of *Merrie England* and the notable editor of *The Clarion*, the chief organ of the Socialist working classes.

Not a few representatives on the London County Council, in Parliament, and on provincial county and municipal councils, were once Fabians. Undoubtedly this able and active society did more than any other body in its early days to socialize both local and imperial politics. The Fabians were never numerous; nevertheless, they exerted an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. In 1885 they had 40 members, in 1895 some 700, and in 1906 about 1,000. The test of membership in the Fabian Society is strict. A Fabian must be a convinced and intelligent Socialist, able and ready to defend and propagate his faith—and only such are received. In a word, it is a society of active propagandists. Mr. Sidney Webb was one of the original

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and leading Fabians—a very able economist, the chief author of *The London Programme*, a man of private means, a graduate (LL.B.) of London University, and a County Councillor. Mr. Webb is in the upper division of the Civil Service, as are also Mr. Sydney Olivier (an Oxford man) and Mr. J. F. Oakeshott, both Fabians. Mr. Olivier has recently been appointed Governor of Jamaica. The most brilliant Fabian is Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, the now popular playwright, a musical and dramatic critic, a great Ibsenite, and a most clever, audacious, and dashing writer and speaker. Fabian tracts owe much to him, especially on economic questions. Other Fabians were Hubert Bland, journalist, litterateur, and critic; Graham Wallas, an Oxonian; the late William Clarke, a Cambridge graduate; the late Frank Podmore, of the Society for Psychical Research; the late Grant Allen, Rev. Stopford Brooke, Walter Crane, H. S. Salt, W. H. Uttley, H. W. Massingham, Dr. F. J. Furnivall, Bishop Gore, Revs. Stuart Headlam, H. C. Shuttleworth, and Mr. H. G. Wells. The first secretary of the society was Mr. Edward R. Pease, of the well-known northern Quaker family. When the Fabian Society was founded, Mr. Pease was a stockbroker; but deeming that calling incompatible with Socialism, Mr. Pease left the Stock Exchange and worked for weekly wages at the carpenter's bench until the business of the Fabian Society demanded his entire service and time.

The Fabians, being educated Socialists, have given Socialism a reasonable aspect by their repudiation of the doctrine of physical force, by their acceptance of the Menger-Jevonian theory of value and their rejection of Marx's labour theory of value, by their recognition of brain-workers as well as hand-workers, and by their opportunist

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policy. In their hands Socialism is a comparatively moderate and practicable thing. Fabian Socialism may be said to be the characteristically English Socialism, with its moderation, its spirit of compromise, its practical nature, its freedom from abstractions and logical pedantry, and, above all, its harmony with the methods of Democratic Constitutionalism ; and it has leavened all political parties, Socialist and otherwise. This is the form—the modified form—in which Socialism is likely to gain any success in England. Even then, of course, the abolition of private property in land, and in the instruments of production and of distribution, the programme of the Independent Labour Party and of the Labour members of Parliament is a very ‘large order,’ especially for a country which is what she is, for weal as well as woe, by means of a vigorous and robust Individualism.

V  
ROBERT  
OWEN





## V

### ROBERT OWEN

'Tis the talent of our English nation  
Still to be plotting some new reformation.

DRYDEN.

THE end of the nineteenth century witnessed the rescue of many memories from undeserved oblivion, and chief amongst them is that of Robert Owen. Tardy justice is now being paid to a prophet and pioneer who, with all his mistakes, foresaw, foretold, and prepared for the better day now dawning upon the people. Robert Owen was the father of English Socialism—we might almost say was the first Socialist in Europe.

Historic Socialism arose simultaneously in France and England. In 1817 Robert Owen placed before a Committee of the House of Commons a scheme for social reorganization by means of Socialistic communities, and in the very same year Saint-Simon propounded his Socialist views in his treatise *L'Industrie*. But, though simultaneous, these actions were independent and disconnected. Saint-Simon's Socialism was somewhat sentimental and theoretic, a result of the French Revolution and a deduction from the abstract principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Robert Owen's, on the other

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hand, was practical, and arose from no abstract principles, but directly from the heart and heat of the New Industry itself. It was truer Socialism, inasmuch as it was of industrial and not of political origin, the direct product of the Industrial Revolution.

Wales gave us the first modern Socialist, for Robert Owen was born in Newtown, Montgomery, in the year 1771. He lived to the great age of eighty-seven, and after roaming nearly all over the world, completed the circle of his life by dying in Newtown in 1858, where, in a dingy graveyard, ignored and neglected until recently, he lies buried; his fellow-townsmen once refusing permission to erect either a drinking-fountain or a clock-tower to his memory. Robert Owen's life may be divided into two parts—an industrial and a theological, although these were never entirely separated. Up to the age of fifty-eight he was mainly busy with industrial problems, and then he wore out the rest of his numerous days—Welshman-like—in theological combat, first as secularist, and finally as spiritualist. He was the son of a saddler and ironmonger in poor circumstances. He had but little education, and began life at ten as a draper's assistant, first in London, then at Stamford, and back to London again in a shop on old London Bridge, where he felt himself 'rich and independent' on £25 a year with board and lodging. But he presently bettered himself by going to St. Ann's Square, Manchester, where he received £40. Here he manifested great business skill, and, seeing his opportunity, at the age of eighteen went into business for himself in the cotton-spinning trade, then taking its new and modern form. When but nineteen he became manager and partner in the Chorlton Twist Company, where he had control of a cotton-mill with five hundred

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hands. He soon manifested great organizing ability and much enterprise. His company became a leading firm, and Owen used the first bags of Sea Island cotton ever imported into this country from the Southern States. In 1799, when twenty-eight, he married the daughter of David Dale, whom he had met previously in Glasgow.

This began his connexion with the famous New Lanark Mills. David Dale, in partnership with Richard Arkwright, the inventor, had in 1784 founded these cotton-mills near the Falls of Clyde in order to utilize the water-power. Owen persuaded the Chorlton Twist Company to purchase these mills for £60,000, and he himself in 1800 became manager and part owner. Here Robert Owen soon showed that he had a soul above money-making. The condition of the English workman was at this juncture degraded in the extreme. With no political rights—without even power to combine—he was ill housed, ill fed, ill paid, all of which had very serious physical and moral results. These evils—evils aggravated by the rise of the factory system and the invention of machinery—were keenly felt by Robert Owen. He found the adults at New Lanark—some 1,500—in a deplorably low, neglected, and vicious condition. He at once improved their dwellings and shortened their hours. The children—some 500 of them—had been well treated by David Dale; but Owen did still more for them: he undertook their education. At first he was distrusted by the workpeople, who credited him only with an eye to profit-mongery in his reforms; but when hard times came in 1806, and most mills were closed, Robert Owen ran his at a loss, and paid £7,000 in wages. This won for him the hearts of the operatives. From that time Robert Owen began his

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wonderful and successful experiments in the organization of industry, with a view to the happiness of the labourer. These experiments became famous, and attracted the attention of statesmen and social reformers in every land. Owen became the hero of a decade and the friend of royalty, great statesmen, and philanthropists. For the adults at New Lanark, besides securing shorter hours of labour and improved dwellings and sanitation, Owen established shops or stores upon the co-operative principle. For the children he established an infant school—or, rather, ‘an institution for the formation of character’—the nature of which can be guessed from the fact that the tiniest infants were taught in the playground ‘never to injure their playmates, but to do all in their power to make them happy.’ In all this Owen was a great pioneer—a pioneer of the Factory Acts, of Co-operation and of Infant Schools, of Garden Cities, and much besides. But while the public approved, his partners did not—it did not seem to their mercenary minds ‘business’; so that when Owen began to build a schoolroom, 90 feet by 40 feet, to be called the Institution, they objected, and stopped proceedings. With building operations suspended, and half-reared walls, Robert Owen turned his attention to the question of getting rid of his covetous partners; and finally Jeremy Bentham and William Allen, the Quaker, bought them out in conjunction with Owen, and formed a new company on the express condition that Owen was to work his will so long as the mills paid his partners five per cent. The New Lanark Mills became more successful and famous than ever. As he afterwards wrote in *The Times* (in 1834): ‘For twenty-nine years we did without the necessity for magistrates or lawyers, without

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a single legal punishment, without any known poor's rate, without intemperance, and without religious animosities. We reduced the hours of labour, well educated all the children from infancy, improved the condition of the adults, paid interest on capital, and cleared upwards of £300,000 profit.' This led to great results, both educationally and socially. Through Robert Owen, Lord Brougham, James Mill, and Sir Charles Gray opened, in 1819, in Brewer's Green, Westminster, the first public infant school in England.

Owen found, however, that mere local philanthropy would not solve the economic question—that it involved entire social reorganization. His reflections and experiments led him to advocate Communism, or, as he termed it, co-operation, 'unrestrained co-operation on the part of all the members for every purpose of social life.' In 1813, the year of the new partnership with Bentham and Allen, Owen published his views in the form of a collection of essays entitled, *A New View of Society; or, Essays on the Formation of Human Character*. These essays advocated a modified form of Communism, and contained much wise and advanced teaching on educational and social questions; but they revealed an antagonism to religion which finally ruined Owen's prospects as a social reformer, especially as he subsequently took no pains to hide that antagonism. Never, however, was a social propaganda more vigorously conducted. Owen had amassed a large fortune, but he freely spent it on his schemes and in advertising them to the whole world. In 1816 Owen gave evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons upon the condition of the people, and his suggestions, which appeared in their Report of 1817, revealed his Socialistic ideas. He anti-

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icipated at the beginning of the New Industry all the evils evolved in its subsequent development, and saw especially that the machinery which was meant to bless man would first curse him. In his *Observations on the Effects of the Manufacturing System* (1817) he says: 'Since the discovery of the enormous, the incalculable power to supersede manual labour, to enable the human race to create wealth by the aid of the sciences, it has been a gross mistake of the political economists to make humanity into slaves to science, instead of making, as Nature intends, science to be the slave and the servant of humanity. And this sacrificing of human beings with such exquisite physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and practical organs, faculties, and powers, so wondrously contained in each individual, to pins, needles, thread, tape, &c., and to all such inanimate materials, exhibits at once the most gross ignorance of the nature and true value of humanity, and of the principles and practices required to form a prosperous, rational, and happy state of society, or the true existence of man upon earth.' He even goes so far as to ask where the increased wealth went which his 2,000 workpeople produced—wealth which it would have taken 600,000 men to have produced a century before. He clearly saw that his people benefited but little. Owen revolted then against the subordination of man to machinery which he saw going on around him. Nor was he satisfied with Malthus's solution. He denied that over-population was any danger; he saw that the efficiency of the means of production would increase in greater ratio than the population, and declared that it was not by artificially limiting it that men could escape from their woes, but 'by instituting rational social arrangements and by securing a fair distribution of wealth.'

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This Owen thought could be secured by the multiplication of communities similar to that of New Lanark—conducted on Socialistic or Communistic principles. These he thought might multiply, be federated, and ultimately unite the whole world into one great happy republic. So persuaded was he that he had found a cure for all social woes that, his way blocked in England, he started forth to found his new world. In 1825 he went to America and founded, in Indiana, New Harmony, a model Commune, at vast expense to himself, while his disciple, Abram Combe, set up another for him at Orbiston, near Glasgow. Both were utter failures, as were also two others started—the one at Balahine, in county Clare, Ireland, in 1831, and the other at Tytherly, in Hampshire, in 1839. These experiments were the financial ruin of Owen, who, with heroic self-sacrifice, sank a whole fortune in them. In 1821 he published a journal, *The Economist*, in which to advocate his cause. The spirit in which he entered on his enterprise may be gathered from the florid language of the first number: ‘I have had the boldness to take upon my shoulders the burden of examining the whole affairs and circumstances of mankind. . . . I summon to my aid all the friends of humanity. If my feeble voice be at first scarcely heard amid the noisy contentions of the world, yet if it be joined by the full chorus of the sons of truth, swelling into clarion shouts of countless multitudes, and caught with joyous acclaim from nation to nation, the harmonizing strains shall resound throughout the globe.’ On the title-page of his paper it was declared to be ‘a periodical paper, explanatory of a new system of society and a plan of association for improving the condition of the working classes, *during*

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*their continuance at their present employment.'* The italics are ours.

But Owen mixed up with his Socialism a blatant and aggressive Secularism and Determinism which, in a much more intolerant day than this, was fatal to his prospects of success. Friction began at New Lanark with his Quaker partner, William Allen, and being now penniless, he was in 1828 forced to withdraw from the mills, the scene of all his triumphs. Henceforth for thirty long wretched years he was a social outcast, spurned by the very folk who once fêted him, his name becoming a synonym for theories and views profane and immoral. Nothing daunted, Owen carried on a most vigorous propaganda amongst the working classes, and so successfully that the *Westminster Review* (1839) stated that Robert Owen's Secularism was the actual creed of a great portion of them. Strange to say, however, his Socialism was still-born. A few enthusiastic followers—the Owenites—did start labour leagues, but the fruit they produced was political: they produced the Chartist agitation. In 1832 Owen established a Labour Exchange, where notes for work done were to supersede money. In 1835 the Owenites first gave the name 'Socialism' to the new movement, at meetings of 'the association of all classes and of all nations.' These are links with the later Socialism, which, however, owes nothing directly to Owen. Owen's Socialism came too soon, not for the need of the workman, but for his intelligence. It died out completely even in Owen's lifetime. Owen finally renounced Secularism for what one calls 'the comfortless vagaries' of spiritualism, due probably to the influence of his well-known son Robert Dale Owen, the American senator and spiritualist. In his declining years he retired



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to the obscurity of his Welsh birthplace, and there his life ebbed out in extreme old age.

Owen was a great man. He was a noble pioneer of magnificent ardour, courage, and self-sacrifice. But he was too iconoclastic and over-confident. He understood neither average human nature nor the laws of social development, and he made the mistake of attacking the accepted ideas of both religion and marriage. Where he was wrong he was offensively wrong, and where he was right he was premature, and therefore his movements were foredoomed to failure. Like some robust perennial plant, they died down quite out of sight, but left such vigorous roots in English soil that after apparent death, under new and favourable conditions, they revived and brought forth abundant fruit in Education, in the Factory Acts, in the Co-operative Movement, and in modern Scientific and Municipal Socialism.



VI  
CHRISTIAN  
SOCIALISM



## VI

### CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

During the last century the Christian religion has encountered no deadlier foe than the philosophy which underlies the competitive system.—WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM is most obnoxious to the Socialist proper. To him it is 'bastard' Socialism—a misnomer and a fraud ; he cannot away with it. This is singular, inasmuch as both kinds of Socialism agree in their diagnosis of the social disease. Both declare that modern society is suffering from a bad industrial system, based upon fundamental economic errors, and ruled by an anti-social motive and spirit. They agree that the labourer is at a disadvantage in the higgling of the market, and is thereby defrauded of his full share of the product ; that we are suffering not so much from over-production as from under-consumption, and that whether or not there be levelling-down, there must be levelling-up. Both declare that political economy has, by its science falsely so-called, made the depression of labour a fine art, and that the sole possession of political power by the employing class hitherto has assisted the process. Both seek a more equitable distribution of the products or profits of Labour and Capital, and both have

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one ultimate object—the elevation of the working classes by putting them in full possession of the product of their labours, and therefore of themselves. Nevertheless, the stanch Socialist will have none of the Christian Socialist. The former may, if he be a Fabian, use the Christian Socialist for his purposes, but he does not believe in him ; and if he be a Social Democrat, he regards him as a heathen man and a publican, with whom he cannot company.

The reasons for this probably are that most Christian Socialists do not see their way to accept the basis of economic Socialism—that labour is the source of all value—with its logical corollaries, that profit, rent, and interest are therefore robberies ; nor are they prepared to advocate the transfer to the State incontinently of *all* the instruments of production and distribution—land, mines, machinery, tools, roads, railways, trams, ships, telegraphs, and suchlike. They see great economic, administrative, and moral difficulties in the way of this. They are not convinced that society is fundamentally wrong, and needs upturning and revolutionizing. They do not believe it to be essentially unjust, as do the Socialists, but that injustice has arisen through greed, selfishness, and a false political economy ; if these be eliminated, they have hope of the present body politic. In addition to this economic difference between Socialists and Christian Socialists, there is also a moral and religious difference. Socialism threatens the family and the Church, and through them morality and religion. Christian Socialism cleaves close to both. This largely accounts for the antipathy between the two. Socialism has been nothing if not anti-religious, although perhaps the theory does not necessitate this, and many Socialists are Christians ; but Christian Socialism is nothing if not religious and

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Christian. The former puts material readjustments in the very forefront, the latter puts moral. The Socialist expects most from material, the Christian Socialist most from moral, changes. The latter is not indifferent to material changes—it is part of his policy to demand them—but he aims at the Christianization of industry, and that not in the interests of Christianity, but in the interests of humanity. The Socialist really suspects the Christian Socialist of being a wolf in sheep's clothing, of caring not so much for the people as for his sect or his Church, and of engaging in the social struggle in order to make religious capital out of it. He gives him credit only for religious propagandism. The Christian Socialist has to bear all this meekly, knowing that the Christian Church has given only too much ground for this hostility and suspicion. It has often neglected the social question, and it has been over-engrossed in matters doctrinal and ecclesiastical. As Professor Stuckenberg says: 'The attitude of many Christians towards the Socialistic movement is astounding. They place themselves among those to whom Christ says, "Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"' The attitude of the present generation leaves little hope that the subject will be mastered by the Church at large. But a new generation is arising which realizes that the very existence of the Church of to-day depends on its grappling with the social problem.'

Now, it is in maintaining this that the Christian Socialist makes unto himself another enemy, and that one of his own household. He is an unhappy wight—he has to steer a dangerous course between the Scylla of a materialistic Socialism and the Charybdis of an individualistic Christianity, the dogs of hell barking

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from both. To forsake figures, he can please nobody. He offends the Socialist by not going far enough, and the Christian Individualist by going too far—he is therefore eschewed by both. Against Christian Individualism, which demands ‘the simple gospel,’ Christian Socialism maintains that the Christian gospel is twofold—individual and social—that the former never has been, and never can be, neglected, but that the latter both has been and is grossly neglected. The social gospel is as sacred and as indispensable as the individual gospel—the two are complementary, and the neglect of either always brings its penalties. An impartial study of the Scriptures reveals the fact that in both Testaments the social gospel is, if anything, the most prominent, and that to ignore the material and social life of men, and the moral condition of classes, communities and states, is the most utter unfaithfulness to the precepts and teachings of the Word of God and the examples of priests, prophets, apostles, evangelists, and the Lord Christ Himself. A Christianity, ‘spiritual’ in the sense of not being ethical and social, and ‘other-worldly’ in the sense of not being this-worldly, is really travestying the good gospel of God. That gospel, contends Christian Socialism, is far from being ‘simple’—it is profound and manifold—and is bent upon saving, not only the individual, but also society ; upon setting up in the earth the kingdom of heaven.

Christian Socialism originated, like Socialism proper, in England—indeed, was the outcome of the Owenite and Chartist movements. After a fiery course it died down, but only to spring up again, phoenix-like, from its own ashes, a generation later. As with Socialism, so with Christian Socialism : in the interval France and



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Germany took up the running, so that Christian Socialism in its latest phase flourished on the Continent before it flourished here.

The early Christian Socialist movement was originated and led by F. D. Maurice and his disciples—C. Kingsley, T. Hughes, Ludlow, and others. Maurice had carefully observed the social movements in France and England, at a time when the Christian Church was fatally and criminally indifferent to them. He studied Saint-Simonism, Owenism, and Chartism when few Christian ministers knew that such movements existed. He had no sympathy whatever with the materialistic and fatalistic theories which underlaid them, but he felt great indignation at the injustice and miseries of the working classes which led to them. He had no faith in the nostrums of 'Socialism'—a word new risen in his time, and with which he was familiar—for the reconstruction of society, but he saw, with the eye of a seer, the nature of the new world-movements and the meaning of the earth-rumblings beneath his feet. It meant the awakening of destructive forces, the evil effects of which could only be averted by a timely awakening of the Christian conscience, and the timely setting of the social house in order. Maurice at once championed all that he thought just, wise, and remedial in the Socialistic and Chartist movements. To him 'combination' in the form of trade-unionist and co-operative societies contained 'more elements of real power than all their schemes and systems for the reconstruction of the universe.' He declared that 'the idea of co-operation on which Owen dwells is one of wonderful depth and importance.'

In conjunction with Kingsley, Hughes, and Ludlow, he took up the cause of the working classes, and

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established societies for co-operative production, for the better housing of the poor, for promoting better sanitation, and for the education of the working man. The *Christian Socialist* was started 'to diffuse the principles of co-operation by the practical application of Christianity to the purposes of trade and industry.' It, and many of the schemes, however, had but a brief life. The sudden collapse of the Chartist movement dealt early Christian Socialism a fatal blow. It was associated with a discredited movement, and regarded as a mere ebullition of discontent and revolutionary sentiment upon the part of Radical parsons, to be frowned upon by every respectable Christian. The result was that for a whole generation the Christian conscience slept on the social question, while the enemy briskly sowed tares—so much so that when it awoke, a generation later, it found all the old evils flourishing, and many others added, society in a parlous condition, and the masses of the people alienated from the Church and almost from Christianity.

While English Christianity slept, however, German Christianity began to awaken. The Catholic Church in Germany in 1863, at the time of the Socialist agitation under Lassalle, at the suggestion of Dr. Döllinger, began to consider the subject in the Catholic clubs. In 1864 Bishop Ketteler, of Mayence, through the personal influence of Lassalle, became convinced of the urgency of the social question, and aroused the attention of Catholic Germany by a remarkable pamphlet upon *The Labour Question and Christianity*, in which he at once sided with Labour against Capital. This did not accomplish all that was expected, but in 1868 the formation of Catholic Labourers' Associations, which met every Sunday to discuss social questions, took root,

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and began a great Christian Socialist movement. This was further consolidated by the organizing and literary ability of Canon Moufang, who gave in his adhesion to the movement in 1871, and founded their paper, the *Katholik*. The part played by the Catholic Church in Germany on the social question has been so influential and impressive during these last thirty-five years that the Socialist vote is now considerably smaller in Catholic than in Protestant States. It was not until 1878 that the Protestant Church in Germany forsook its Individualism and embraced Social Christianity. At the instigation of Herren Todt, Stöcker, and Kögel in that year, a conference was held, and a programme for social ameliorative work was drawn up and adopted. Since then great progress has been made in the Protestant Church. Several very important congresses have been held for the discussion of the relation of the Church to social questions, and to devise practical steps. At the 1892 Congress there were present such eminent men as Professors Wagner, Weiss, Giercke, Müller, and Harnack, and Pastors Stöcker, Bodelschwingh, and Naumann. The zeal of Christian Socialists in Germany may be gathered from the fact that a young pastor, Herr Paul Göhre, worked for three months as an operative at a machine factory in Chemnitz, in Saxony, that he might ascertain the real attitude of the artisan class towards social and religious questions, and he afterwards published a book relating his experience. Led by a number of young pastors, of whom Frederick Naumann was chief, Christian Socialism in Prussia became so aggressive that it incurred the hostility of the young German Emperor.

Christian Socialism has also been taken up very earnestly in France, both by the Catholic and the Protestant

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Churches. Count de Mun was the eloquent founder of the Catholic Christian Socialist movement, and has done good work in organization and advocacy. Le Play also has achieved much by the accumulation and study of social facts. He is the father of the Charles Booth school in England. Not only are Catholic workmen organized and helped, but in the north of France there is a Catholic Association of Employés of the North, the object of which is to assist employers to become real captains of industry, furthering the material and moral well-being of their employés in a large, just, and liberal spirit. French Protestants also have taken up Christian Socialism very actively under Pastor Fallot, M. Charles Gide, and Charles Secrétan, and are already organized. The Congress of Protestant Associations 'for the practical study of social questions' has now some seven hundred members.

Belgium also has produced most distinguished Christian Socialists in the persons of Professors Huet, E. de Laveleye, and C. Perin. The United States, too, is well in advance in the same way.

Christian Socialism did not revive in England until well on in the eighties. Arthur Toynbee died in 1883, and his death was the life of the modern Christian Socialist movement here. Since then it has advanced by leaps and bounds: there is never a congress, convocation, or union meeting of any of the Churches in which the social question does not receive careful consideration. The Press pours out books upon the subject: the memory of the first Christian Socialists has been graciously revived. The Christian Social Union of the Established Church is an increasingly powerful organization. Its head quarters are at Pusey House, Oxford; its organ, the *Economic Review*, is intended 'for the study

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of duty in relation to social life,' and contains articles by experts dealing with 'economic morals from the point of view of Christian teaching'; its collected addresses, *Lombard Street in Lent* and *Good Citizenship*, have had a wide circulation. It also publishes two magazines, *The Commonwealth* and *Good-will*. There are now about seven hundred members, including such names as those of Bishops Gore and Stubbs, Archdeacons Sinclair and Furse, Canons Barnett, Scott Holland and Eyton, and Father Adderley, and Revs. Wilfrid Richmond, Carter, Marson, Dearmer, Fry, W. Cunningham, Frome Wilkinson, and others. In addition to this, the Established Church has Toynbee Hall, the University Settlement in the East End, which is doing so good an intellectual and social work, and is the pattern for others of like nature. It has also its social wing of the Church Army, under the Rev. W. Hunt, with night shelters, labour homes, and registries. There are many parish clergymen, too, who now add definitely social work to their religious and philanthropic labours. The Roman Catholic Church in England, under the leadership of the late Cardinal Manning and his successor, Cardinal Vaughan, emulated French, German, and American Catholicism. Nor is Nonconformity behind on the social question. Modern England and English Christianity owe much to the bold and wise labours of men like General Booth, H. Price Hughes, Dr. Horton, and Dr. Clifford. The Congregationalists first raised the 'bitter cry' which led to so much heart-searching, and finally resulted in the 'Darkest England' Scheme of the Salvation Army, the greatest of all practical Christian Social movements. The Churches have established, too, their own Labour Homes and Social Settlements. The

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Congregationalists and the Wesleyans both have their Settlements. The 'Forward Movement' in Methodism and in other religious bodies, with its great town missions and Christian Social machinery like that of the Manchester and Salford Mission under the Rev. S. F. Collier, is saturated with the spirit of Christian Socialism. Wherever there are life and growth, there the old religious Individualism is seen to be impossible. The Christian Social Brotherhood has long been in existence under the presidency of Dr. Clifford. The Wesleyan Methodist Union for Social Service has now 1,500 members, and has published *The Citizen of To-morrow*, of which 10,000 copies have been sold. The Presbyterians, Primitive Methodists, and Unitarians have also Unions for Social Service. All this we really owe to the devoted labours of a few in the past. As the *Spectator* has wisely said: 'The best men and women of this generation are reaping what others sowed long ago, in a new grasp of the idea that the kingdom of earth is the point of departure for the kingdom of heaven. This age can bear better with those who fiercely denounce a preaching of the kingdom of heaven which has little to do with earth, because it better knows the value of those who helped to connect earthly work with divine love.' Christian Socialists look forward to the time when every Christian Church will be organized on Christian-Social lines, will put forth both hands to redeem the whole man—body, soul, and spirit—and will minister to man's material, intellectual, and religious wants, in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ.

VII  
CHARLES  
KINGSLEY





## VII

### CHARLES KINGSLEY

His life was gentle ; and the elements  
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, ' This was a Man.'

SHAKESPEARE.

WE hear much of Charles Kingsley the novelist, Charles Kingsley the poet, Charles Kingsley the canon, Charles Kingsley the scientist, and not too much of him in any one of those capacities, but we hear too little of Charles Kingsley the Christian Socialist ; and yet perhaps, next to his lovely songs and lyrics, this is his main title to enduring fame.

For ten years before his death he was a waning influence, and for ten years after a waning memory ; but then both suddenly and rapidly revived—revived, indeed, in an almost phenomenal manner. So much so that in a year or two recently some millions of copies of the sixpenny edition of his works have been sold. It is a very gratifying fact ; for no more stirring and wholesome literature can be possibly put into the hands of young England than Charles Kingsley's novels. But how is this resurrection of a waning reputation to be accounted for ? Whence comes this posthumous popularity ? Some say that it is due to the revelation made of his character

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in Mrs. Kingsley's *Life and Letters*. Certainly that charming work is a permanent addition to the biographical literature of the land, and it did reveal to Englishmen noble and gentle aspects of Kingsley's character unknown to them, as well as qualities unsuspected in him. By that delightful work his countrymen found that his private life accorded well with his profession and his public life, and that he was a man true to the core, and morally as well as intellectually great. No doubt that is part of the reason why they took him to their hearts again, but that is not the whole account of the matter. Whence comes the popularity of this Church canon, of this University scholar and aristocrat, amongst the masses of the English people, who to-day have hardly an ear for any one or anything that is not economic and social? The answer assuredly is that the depth of his social sympathies and the fervour of his Christian Socialism have at last met their reward. Kingsley's hour is come as a Christian Socialist. He would have rejoiced to see this day. In his own he was as a voice crying in the wilderness, 'Repent'; and he was largely unheard. All through the fifties, he was perhaps the best abused man in England; and although he lived down the obloquy and became famous instead of notorious, yet the numerous obituary notices of him which appeared in the seventies became apologetic when they reached the ardent period during which he carried over the land the fiery cross of Christian Socialism. Kingsley was in advance of his time on all social questions; in advance, that is, of his contemporaries, not of the needs of his time. His eagle eye penetrated into the heart of the industrial system of his day, and saw its iniquity and corruption, and the appalling heritage

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of woe it possessed, and would hand down to generations following. And—to his everlasting honour be this written—he did his duty as a man and a Christian, in trying to awaken his countrymen to the needs of the hour.

Kingsley's sympathy with the people in their degradation and misery began, he tells us, when he was a boy in Bristol. During the Bristol riots he saw houses burning, and men wallowing in the gutter through drink; and these sights made his chivalrous nature feel that nothing but real evils and grave injustice brought working men to this. Says he, 'I became a Radical on the spot'—by this he meant a Christian Socialist.

Whilst at the University of Cambridge, the fulminations of Carlyle against the social and industrial evils of the day still further fired his spirit, and when at last he became, first curate and then Rector of Eversley, and the Chartist agitation broke out, he flung himself into the fray with ardour and with effect. His famous declaration before the Chartists at a meeting at Kennington, that he was 'a parson and a Chartist,' was the beginning of strife. For a decade he was in deadly grips with all the powers that be, and dealt with voice and pen such swashing and resounding blows at pot-bellied Mammon that old England yet resounds with them. He was greatly influenced in this by one whom he loved to call his 'Master,' and at whose feet he devoutly sat in theology, ethics, and social economy, viz. Frederick Denison Maurice. Maurice supplied him with reasons, motives, methods, and inspiration. Maurice was the founder of Christian Socialism in England—Kingsley, its ardent knight-errant. Into the Chartist strife they flung pell-mell, and poured forth

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upon an astonished capitalist and so-called Christian public tracts, bills, posters, and appeals on behalf of the working men of England. Kingsley's fine literary gifts were exercised in writing in Maurice's *Christian Socialist* and in *Politics for the People*. In his *Letters to the Chartists* over the signature of 'Parson Lot' he championed the cause of justice for the people, admixing it with wise and Christian counsel. Kingsley thought the Chartists erred in expecting too much from political and legislative reforms—he himself erred in expecting too little. Said he: 'God will only reform society on condition of our reforming every man his own self; while the devil is quite ready to help us to mend the laws and the Parliament, earth and heaven, without ever starting such an impertinent and "personal" request as that a man should mend himself.'

In the year 1848 the Chartist agitation fizzled unfortunately out on Kennington Common, and retarded the working-class movement. It retarded also the Christian Socialist movement, involving it in all the ignominy and contempt which accompany even the temporary failure of a just cause. When the righteous oracle ceases to speak, then every dog barks, be he mongrel or cur. Overwhelmed with reproaches and rebukes, but undaunted, Kingsley retired to his country charge and there took up his pen, and in the same year published in the pages of *Fraser's Magazine* his novel *Yeast*. This was a masterly and brilliant book, dealing most realistically with the forlorn and degraded condition of the English agricultural labourer. It created a great sensation; such a sentence as the following—to-day a truism—seemed like red revolution: 'It did strike him that the few might possibly be made for the

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many, and not the many for the few, and that property was made for man, and not man for property.'

*Yeast* was succeeded by *Alton Locke*. As the former dealt with the social problem in rural districts, this dealt with it in cities and towns, with equal if not with greater skill and genius. The tailor-poet, with his soul above stitches, the wrongs of the 'sweated,' the overcrowding, insanitation, and lack of education, good clothes, and comforts upon the part of the labouring poor, were all done dramatically into literature. The book might be written for this hour, in as far, alas ! as it points out evils which flourish still, but not in as far as its remedial outlook is concerned. That is over-individualistic, grandfatherly, and aristocratic ; but it is a fine book. Here, too, Kingsley gave one of his noble lyrics which is worth quoting :

Weep, weep, weep and weep,  
For pauper, dolt, and slave !  
Hark ! from wasted moor and fen,  
Feverous alley, stifling den,  
Swells the wail of Saxon men,  
Work—or the grave !

Down, down, down and down,  
With idler, knave, and tyrant !  
Why for sluggards cark and moil ?  
He that will not live by toil  
Has no right on English soil !  
God's Word's our warrant.

Up, up, up and up !  
Face your game and play it !  
The night is past, behold the sun !  
The idols fall, the lie is done !  
The Judge is set, the doom begun !  
Who shall stay it ?

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*Alton Locke* created a great outcry against Kingsley in 1849 and the succeeding years, especially on the part of religious people and the religious press. He was not only denounced for writing 'fiction' (would God it were, even now!), that was a damning sin in the eyes of many; but he was condemned for sowing seeds of bitterness and discontent, for 'setting the poor against the rich,' 'class against class,' and all the other time-honoured and hypocritical middle-class pharisaisms which meet the ear of every man who exposes social evils. Things culminated in 1851—the Exhibition year—when Kingsley preached in a London church on 'The Message of the Church to Working Men.' During the course of his sermon, he said: 'All systems of society which favour the accumulation of capital in a few hands, which oust the masses from the soil their forefathers possessed of old, which reduce them to the level of serfs and day-labourers living on wages and alms, which crush them down with debt or in any wise degrade and enslave them or deny them a permanent stake in the commonwealth, are contrary to the kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed.' As soon as the sermon ended, the incumbent arose in his place, and said that, while he agreed with much that had been said, he must say that much of it was dangerous and untrue. This unwonted scene in a church created a great stir in London, and Kingsley soon had the harpies of the *Times* and of society upon him. He returned to Eversley discouraged and depressed. He never lost his love for the people's cause, and to the very end of his days devoted his energies to co-operation, sanitation, and social reform; but from this time he 'tapered off,' he thundered less, fulminated less, was less leonine in tone; he felt less

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able to continue *Athanasius contra mundum*. His activities in the more humdrum but very necessary rôle of a co-operator never relaxed, but his bold attacks, from the standpoints of a Christian Socialist, upon the existing industrial system as such, quite ceased. On the other hand, he never withdrew a word of what he had written, or of what he had spoken in such trumpet tones, and his seed bears fruit to-day. His own stirring, lyrical lines are truer than ever :

The Day of the Lord is at hand, at hand !  
Its storm rolls up the sky :  
The nations sleep starving on heaps of gold,  
All dreamers toss and sigh ;  
The night is darkest before the morn ;  
When pain is sorest the child is born,  
And the day of the Lord is at hand.

Gather you, gather you, angels of God—  
Freedom, and mercy, and truth :  
Come ! for the Earth is grown coward and old,  
Come down and renew her youth ;  
Wisdom, Self-sacrifice, Daring, and Love,  
Haste to the battle-field, stoop from above :  
The Day of the Lord is at hand.





VIII  
FRENCH  
SOCIALISM



## VIII

### FRENCH SOCIALISM

Liberty ! liberty ! in all things let us have justice, then we shall have enough liberty.—**JOUBERT.**

To England and France belong the honour, if it be an honour, of originating European Socialism. It sprang up simultaneously in both countries in the first quarter of this century. Although simultaneous, it was of characteristically different origin in the two countries : in England it had a practical, and in France a theoretical, origin ; in our own country it was the outcome of events, in France of ideas. Early French Socialism compared favourably with early English Socialism in its superior literary expression and logical formulation. The theories of Saint-Simon and Fourier were brilliantly conceived and advocated ; whether or not they lacked practicability, they did not lack definiteness. With French thoroughness and love of logic and system, society was elaborately reconstructed on ideal principles—that is, upon paper—for those early Socialists were unable to get farther. All their dazzling designs and proposed social systems were thoroughly Utopian. They contained very much true criticism of the established social order, criticism which is valid to this very hour ; but

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they were utterly premature ; the world was nowhere ready for such schemes, not even in revolutionary Paris, where the frequent revolutions were of a political and legal character—seldom, or never, of an industrial or economic character. These schemes were based upon a too optimistic theory of human nature ; it was credited with a love of truth, a zeal for righteousness, a brotherly love, and a capacity for rapid perfecting, which it was far from possessing.

Saint-Simon was born at Paris in 1760. He came of a noble family, and had for his tutor the great French physiocrat D'Alembert, who helped, with Diderot and others, to prepare the way for the French Revolution. Saint-Simon imbibed early a passion for liberty, but took no active part in political struggles. At the age of forty he began to review all his knowledge and judgments, and, amongst other things, arrived at new and definite ideas on industrial and social economy. In the year 1817, in *L'Industrie*, Saint-Simon first published his Socialistic views. This work was followed up by others in 1819, 1821, and 1823, until in 1825—the year of his death—appeared his most important work, the *Nouveau Christianisme*. By these works he originated French Socialism and much beside. In his latest works he endeavoured to define 'essential Christianity' in its application to the social problem. Though rather vague in his ideas, he was most suggestive and stimulating. His views attracted little attention in his lifetime, and he lived and died poverty-stricken, disappointed, and neglected. But directly after his death a Saint-Simonian School arose, headed by Bazard and Enfantin, who developed and arranged his ideas into a system. Enfantin soon caused a split in the camp, and finally

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brought discredit and disbandment upon the school by grossly immoral views upon the relations of the sexes. Saint-Simon's influence, however, has been great, and still counts for something. He is undeniably right in declaring that 'the whole of society ought to strive towards the amelioration of the moral and physical existence of the poorest class; society ought to organize itself in the way best adapted for this end.'

Fourier was perhaps prior even to Saint-Simon in his Socialistic views, but they gained no publicity until after the death of Saint-Simon. Fourier's attention to the industrial problem was aroused by being punished for telling the truth about some goods in his father's drapery shop, and also by witnessing the destruction of an immense quantity of rice in order to maintain high prices in the midst of scarcity. He was born at Besançon in 1772, and published his views in three works, written in 1808, 1822, and 1829. He elaborated a wonderful scheme for reorganizing society in the form of a *phalanstery*, or commune. Each phalanstery was to consist of a phalange (from Greek *phalanx*, battle-array) of 1,800 persons occupying a common residence, the *phalanstère*, and enjoying the fruit of their labours together. Industry and talent were to receive their rewards, but a comfortable minimum was assured to every member—'a living wage.' The remainder was divided into twelve shares, of which five went to labour, four to capital, and three to talent. In distributing the reward to labour, the present method was to be reversed, i.e. necessary labour was to be best paid, useful labour next, and pleasant labour worst paid. We can see from this the origin of Ruskin and Bellamy's speculations on the subject. The difference between the Socialism of Saint-

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Simon and that of Fourier is very marked. Saint-Simon's is based upon the principles of authority and centralization; Fourier's upon the principles of freedom and decentralization. Saint-Simon would place the material interests of society in the hands of industrial chiefs, and their spiritual interests in the hands of men of science. Fourier, however, was strongly for individual rights and local self-government.

Socialism in France, up to 1848, occupied the attention only of the few and the educated. It was not until the Revolution of that year that it attracted the attention of the working classes, and really entered upon the stage of history. The chief agent in this was Louis Blanc—who, born in Madrid in 1811, settled down later in Paris, and succeeded as a journalist. In 1840 he published his *Organisation du Travail*, in which he demanded 'the democratic organization of the State as preparatory to social reorganization.' Herein he formulated his scheme of national workshops which were to absorb the unemployed, and gradually to supersede individual workshops, and lead to the State organization of labour. The book, written in a brilliant and eloquent style, caught the ear and won the heart of the French workmen, with the result that when the Revolution took place, and the Provisional Government was formed, it was found necessary to include Louis Blanc in it, in order that he might make his social experiments. But Louis Blanc was a literary man, a journalist, and unfit for political life and administration. The consequence was that he became the tool and victim of designing colleagues, who foreordained that the national workshops started in Paris should fail. Their failure is to this day attributed to the Utopian nature of Louis Blanc's ideas—whereas his ideas

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were never put into practice. His plan was to admit to the national workshops only those who gave guarantees of character, and to put them to productive work, whereas any idlers from the streets of Paris were admitted, and they were put to unproductive work. This has been established by a French Governmental inquiry. One great effect of Blanc's ideas was that they attracted the attention of Ferdinand Lassalle, who so completely made them his own as to deny any indebtedness whatever to Louis Blanc.

The names of all French Socialists have a very ill odour, and none more than Proudhon's. Personally Proudhon's life was upright, pure, and honourable, as, indeed, also was Fourier's, despite his loose theories concerning marriage. Proudhon is especially in ill repute in English eyes because he made that atrocious announcement that 'La propriété c'est le vol' (Property is robbery). In England, where

Proputtty, proputtty sticks, an' proputtty, proputtty graws,

and where laws for the protection of 'proputtty' are much sterner than those for the protection of persons, such a statement sounds scandalous. Its sound is really worse than its meaning. What Proudhon meant was that property was a means of exploiting labour, that 'it reaped without labour, consumed without producing, and enjoyed without exertion,' and hence its accumulation was not in the interest of society, and should be checked by taxation, if not confiscation. This is really identical with the doctrine of Karl Marx. Proudhon published *What is Property?* in 1840, and his great work, *Système des Contradictions économiques* in 1846. He was elected to the Assembly in 1849, and gained

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great notoriety by his extreme views upon property, and his contention that the end of government is 'anarchy'—by which he meant self-government. He suffered many things for his views—abuse, poverty, imprisonment. Proudhon expressed himself paradoxically, perhaps to make men think; certainly his bark was worse than his bite. Proudhon did not expect the millennium at once; the social changes, which he advocated on grounds of reason and justice, he only expected to see slowly and gradually realized as the characters and nature of men improved.

After the Revolution of 1848, and the failure of the national workshops, Socialism lost its hold upon the French people. In France as in England, political changes had been turned by the *bourgeoisie*, or middle classes, almost entirely to their own advantage. Sops were cast to Cerberus which quietened him for a decade or two, but the meal was enjoyed by the comfortable classes. Some irreconcilables, however, remained in France—the few fierce, fanatical, desperate Communists of whom Louis Blanqui was a daring leader, and who only died in 1881. Socialism, as an economic theory, made no headway in France after 1848 until quite recently. It is now ripening fast, however, in the usual French hothouse way. Emile Eudes succeeded Blanqui as leader of the Communists, the physical-force Socialists and Anarchists, but died a few years back in the very act of cursing the *bourgeoisie*. His successor was M. Vaillant, deputy for Belville. Another eminent modern French Socialist was Benoit Malon; he was at first a journeyman dyer, but he became a literary man and the philosopher of the French Socialist party. He was a member of the Commune, and returned to Paris from exile when the amnesty was declared. From that time



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he became a literary exponent of scientific and evolutionary Socialism, advocating to the day of his death the realization of the Socialist ideal by legalization, not by revolution but by evolution. This has given new life to the Socialist party. The Socialists are not a united party in France any more than elsewhere. There have been several groups. There was the Blanquist or Revolutionary group, the leader of which was M. Vaillant, whose programme was the reconstitution of the Commune. M. Millerand led another group, which aimed at combining all the Socialist factions into one great group to act together in the Assembly under the leadership of M. Goblet. M. Goblet, an ex-Minister, espoused Socialism under a moderate form—a form somewhat of the Fabian order in this country—opportunist, constitutional, permeative. His accession to the Socialist party bore important fruit; for under his leadership the Socialists were instrumental in unseating the Government of M. Dupuy, thus gaining the first constitutional victory of Socialism, and of rendering several successive Governments very insecure in their seats. They have also had much to do, indirectly, with a remarkable manifesto of the Bourgeois Government. The leader of an important group of French Socialists is M. Jules Guesde. He leads, with M. La Fargue, the son-in-law of Karl Marx, the Marxist section of French Socialists, that section which contends for Internationalism, and does not disdain financial help from German Socialists, French though it be. But this idealistic policy does not succeed well in France—Sedan is still too recent. M. Guesde is a Collectivist of the strictest type. His lean, lank figure, hollow chest and voice, piercing black eyes, black hair and beard, and slouched hat, make him, in appearance, a typical-looking

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political fanatic. His programme is to capture the French Chamber and secure as much Socialist legislation as the country will bear. By 1898 he hoped to have a majority in the Chamber, and by the same date the rural districts converted to Socialism. A propaganda in the agricultural districts went on, similar to the one long carried on in the towns. But the French peasant proprietors will take much persuading to relinquish private ownership in land. They are still the greatest obstacle toward realizing Socialism in France. This the leaders feel, and hence the propaganda.

In 1899 all the French Socialist parties united in face of the Dreyfus agitation and returned many deputies to the Chamber. A split occurred in 1900, when M. Millerand entered the Waldeck-Rousseau Government as Minister of Commerce. The Guesdists, as thorough-going Marxists, regarded this step as compromising the independence of Socialism. MM. Jaurès and Briand, leaders of the Opportunist wing of French Socialism, defended the action and justified it from its results in practical legislation. At first the Guesdists, or Revolutionary Socialists, carried the day, but the Possibilists, or Reformist Socialists, under the eloquent leadership of M. Jaurès, finally conquered, and prevented M. Millerand's expulsion from the party. They form now by far the larger Socialist group, and are often called the Neo-Socialists. In 1902 the Socialists together polled 805,000 votes and returned 48 deputies to the Chamber. In 1906 they polled 1,120,000 votes, and returned no less than 75 deputies. M. Vivian and M. Briand, Possibilists, accepted office, the one as Minister of Labour and the other as Minister of Education, under M. Clemenceau, and they carry on the work

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of industrial amelioration inaugurated by M. Millerand, though not without difficulties caused by friends and foes. In a celebrated debate with M. Jaurès in the Chamber in 1906, M. Clemenceau, the Premier, disavowed theoretic Socialism, but espoused practical Socialism in the form of the Eight-Hours' Day, a Graduated Income Tax, and the restoration to the nation of the great monopolies. The Possibilists are divided into two groups: the Broussists, after M. Brousse, representing a decentralized Collectivism, and the Allemanist, after M. Jean Allemane, representing centralized Collectivism.

With such an eager and politically fearless country as France, and with the position already attained by the Socialist party, some very startling and instructive legislative and industrial experiments may be expected before very long, which it will behove the other nations of Europe carefully to watch.



IX  
PROUDHON



## IX

### PROUDHON

The word 'anarchy,' precisely because it signifies without government, will become equal to saying 'Natural Order, harmony of the needs and interests of all, complete liberty with complete solidarity.'—ENRICO MALATESTA.

PROUDHON represents the transition from Socialism to Anarchy. One of the early French Socialists, his teaching so impressed Michael Bakounin, the Russian, who met him at Paris in 1847, that he at once embraced it and gave it practical direction and energetic advocacy. Bakounin was the founder of the Anarchist party, but Proudhon was the father of the theory of Anarchism. In the light of past events, both in England and on the Continent, and with a desire to understand even the most forbidding of social movements, it is proposed here to consider more closely the springs of theoretical Anarchism in Proudhon. No attempt will be made to give a complete account of Anarchism, or even a criticism of it, save in so far as they may be involved in a brief account of Proudhon's life and teaching.

A glance at the portrait of Proudhon prepares one for an original thinker. It is the head of a powerful

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intellectual personality. The face is strong yet tender, its main expression coming from a noble brow and piercing eyes. The fine head, set on broad shoulders, is only marred by a certain careless, unkempt, disorderly appearance, which probably betokens his peasant origin. Proudhon was born at Besançon. Besançon, the capital of the department of Doubs, on the confines of Switzerland, known now chiefly for its watch trade, is an ancient and interesting city. Small though it be, it can boast of being the birthplace, not only of Proudhon, but also of Fourier, the Socialist, who was born there in 1772 ; of Abel Remusat, the Chinese scholar, born there in 1788 ; and, most of all, of Victor Hugo, who was born there in 1802.

Pierre Joseph Proudhon was born there in 1809, of very poor parents. His father was a brewer's cooper, and so poor that the lad Pierre was a cowherd when he should have been at school. Some generous neighbours, noticing the brightness of the boy, and his pathetic efforts at self-education as he grew up, sent him, at the age of sixteen, to the college of his native town. From the first he was an educational success, displaying great talent. He studied amidst many pecuniary difficulties, and was obliged frequently to borrow his school-books and copy out his lessons. He is said to have reached home on one occasion, laden with prizes, to find that there was no dinner for him.

When about nineteen, the distress of his family grew so great that he left college and became a compositor, and as such was noted for the most intelligent and punctual discharge of his duty. Between the intervals of work he continued his education with rare resolution. As corrector of the Press he possessed many advantages



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above the ordinary workman, and he made excellent use of them. He had to read the proofs of religious and ecclesiastical works, and thus acquired considerable theological knowledge. He also taught himself Hebrew in a similar way, and employed himself in comparing that language with Greek, Latin, and French. In 1830 he was offered the editorship of a governmental or ministerial journal, but declined it, preferring to retain his intellectual independence. In 1838 he sent in to the Academy of Besançon a competitive essay on the general principles of grammar. It was worthless as a philological treatise, but nevertheless displayed such talent that the Academy awarded him a bursary, the *pension Suard* of 1,500 francs for three years, usually bestowed upon young men of great promise. Had they been able to foresee the results of this scholarship, certainly it would never have been awarded to Proudhon. With this money he travelled to Paris, and there met with the Socialists, who greatly influenced him. In 1839 he wrote an essay *On the Utility of keeping Sunday*, which, despite its strangely orthodox title, contained the germs of nearly all his later revolutionary sentiments—and this a year after he had left Besançon! But undoubtedly the ‘iron had entered into his soul’ during his youth and early manhood, and was now producing its natural results.

In 1840, when Proudhon was thirty-one, he published his first and most famous work, *What is Property?* His answer to his own question greatly scandalized his patrons of Besançon: it was that ‘property is robbery.’ In his axiomatic way, Proudhon declared that property was simply the right of *aubaine*; that as the goods of the *aubain*, the non-naturalized stranger, fell to the Crown

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when he died, so the property of the labourer—his value or product—fell to the landowner or employer while he (the labourer) was yet alive. There was some talk of withdrawing his pension, but, to their honour be it recorded, the Academy of Besançon permitted him to hold it for the full period.

In 1842, upon the publication of a third attack upon property, addressed nominally to the Fourierist M. Considerant, he was arrested and tried at Besançon, but—in that city so charitable to Proudhon—acquitted. His most elaborate and ambitious work, *The Philosophy of Misery*, was published in 1846. Here he works out his doctrine of what he called ‘Anarchy.’ Proudhon had tried to earn his living in his native town as a small master printer, but without success; his own publications were too notorious and unconventional—if not dangerous. He next became a manager of a printing business in Lyons—always hospitable to advanced strangers and thinkers. But in 1847 he was drawn again to Paris, where he had become known through his writings. He arrived there at a critical moment in the Revolutionary movement. In 1848 the Revolution broke out, and in it Proudhon was a prominent figure. He was elected by the Seine Department a member of the Assembly, but was unable to gain much hearing there, his opinions being so paradoxical and extreme. The Revolution of 1848 was made in the interests of, or was controlled by, the middle classes, who therefore made it their business either to ignore or, if that were impossible, to circumvent extremists and democrats like Proudhon and Louis Blanc. Proudhon’s proposal in the Assembly to confiscate or appropriate one-third of all rent and interest for the State was, of

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course, rejected. He then turned to journalism, and in several different newspapers gave bitter vent to his wrath and his remedies. Amongst other things, Proudhon started a bank, which was to give the workmen gratuitous credit, and so pave the way for a better time. It was a scheme something like that of agricultural banks, now a great success in many Continental countries, but in Proudhon's hands it was a failure. He invited a loan of five million francs, and had only seventeen thousand offered.

Proudhon always expressed himself in the most violent and threatening language, language not meant to be taken literally. With him society was to be instantly destroyed, if it did not accept his ideas. He presented his pistol—his theories—at its head, crying, like a stage-highwayman: 'Your money or your life!' Yet he constantly ridiculed the Socialists of his day for thinking that society could be soon and suddenly reformed; this, he said, in his usual intemperate style, 'was the most accursed lie that could be offered to mankind.' So violent and threatening was his language in advocating his theories that, in 1849, he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. This was in his absence, for he had, upon tidings of danger, fled to Geneva. A few months of expatriation, however, were enough for him, and he returned, surrendered, and underwent his full term of imprisonment, being incarcerated in the prison of St. Pelagie, Paris.

Whilst there the romance of his life took place. He was permitted to go through the ceremony of marriage with a young working woman with whom he was enamoured, he himself being then of the mature age of forty.

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When his times, his comrades, and his theories are considered, Proudhon appears to have been an unusually noble man. He was an affectionate husband, a true friend, and upright in all his private dealings. He did not indulge in feelings of hatred or bitterness towards individuals; he reserved such for society as a whole. He was strongly opposed to the Socialism of Saint-Simon and Fourier, not only on account of its Utopianism, but also on account of its immorality.

Pure in his own life and principles, he detested their horrid theories, and, indeed, in one case, practice of 'free love.' Proudhon may be said to have retained the primitive austere morality of the sober French peasantry, which in this respect offers a great contrast to the salacious Parisians.

Proudhon quarrelled with French Socialism, not only over its immorality and its impracticability, but also over its Collectivism. To Socialists the State was everything; to Proudhon, nothing. Socialists were for the utmost centralization; Proudhon, for the utmost decentralization. He was against authority in every form: law, the police, the administration of Governments (imperial or local), the army, the navy, all were to him marks of social imperfection and instruments of tyranny. The free individual needed none of these things; he ought to be, and should be, a law to himself; all external laws were unnecessary. His favourite axiom was that the goal of progress was Anarchy. By this he meant, not social disorder and confusion, but freedom from government—in the literal and not the popular sense of the Greek-derived word 'Anarchy.' In all this he simply declared what Herbert Spencer calls 'the goal of Absolute Ethics,' that the individual man finally will

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become so highly moralized and self-controlled that he will need no external laws. But relative ethics demand not a little control and governmental authority over those—and they form, perhaps, the majority of society—who are but moral and intellectual children. However, Proudhon and the Socialists quarrelled over this point ; and the same point was at issue afterwards between Bakounin the decentralizing Anarchist, the disciple of Proudhon, and Karl Marx the centralizing Socialist.

Proudhon had no particular constructive programme ; he did not believe one could at that time be formed. He simply, in an ardent, perfervid, and violent manner, advocated a few leading ideas—now the tenets of the Anarchist party—that ‘property is robbery,’ that service pays service—an exact and literal equivalent should be rendered for all work done—that the ideal for society is Anarchy, the freedom of individuals from all external government.

During his term of imprisonment he wrote several works, and was liberated in 1852. He remained quiet under the Second Empire until 1858, and then the fire burned in his bones again, and he wrote against Church and State with his old violence. For this he was prosecuted, and sentenced to three years’ imprisonment. This time he fled to Brussels, where he remained some time, occupying himself with writing. In 1860 he was amnestied, and returned to France. His health being broken, he remained in obscurity, and died at Passy, near Paris, January 19, 1865.

Sainte-Beuve, in his unfinished monograph upon Proudhon, declares that he was an original thinker, an attractive personality, a man with a kind heart, and of pure life and motive. It is the more sad to think

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that such a man, through lack of caution, of historic knowledge, and, above all, of the effect of wild and whirling words upon undisciplined and evil natures, should have started in human society forces which threaten much more to retard than to advance human freedom.

X  
STATE  
SOCIALISM





## X

### STATE SOCIALISM

If the State will show a little more Christian solicitude for the working man, then I believe that the gentlemen of the Wyden [Social Democratic] programme will sound their bird-call in vain.—  
BISMARCK.

WHEN the late Sir William Harcourt jauntily said, 'We are all Socialists now,' he showed how little he really knew of Socialism. If he had said, 'We are all *State* Socialists now,' he would have been much nearer the truth. State Socialism is a very different thing from scientific Socialism. State Socialism is quite compatible with the existence of private property and of a capitalistic system of industry, with competition and the existence of privileged and governing classes. The State Socialist, as such, has no idea of revolutionizing modern society. He does not seek, as does the Socialist proper, to withdraw from private ownership all the instruments of production and distribution. He has no such object.

It is because of this that the Social Democrats, both in England and Germany, treat State Socialism with hostility and contempt. Witness, for instance, the unpopularity, amongst English Social Democrats, of the Fabian Society, which accepts State Socialism as an ally.

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Witness also the attacks by German Socialists upon the State Socialism of Bismarck and the German Emperors. Bebel and the late W. Liebknecht have both declared that its purpose in Germany is to buttress up Monarchy and Imperialism by offering the German working classes small reforms. Hence, despite Factory Acts, Accident, Sickness, and Old-Age Insurance Acts, the Socialist leaders in Germany have, so far, been successful in maintaining the strength of Social Democracy.

But while State Socialism is to be distinguished from Economic Socialism, it is, on the other hand, to be equally distinguished from State Individualism. In fact, State Socialism is an eclectic thing—a system intermediate between both, and one which tries to preserve the merits of both, differing from State Individualism in that it abandons for ever the principle of *laissez-faire*. State Socialism does not admit the reign of free competition in industry ; it believes in restraining the strong from injustice, and in affording State protection to the industrially weak. It would broaden the function of the State, so as to make it not merely passive—the mere preserver of order and the protector of property—but active, the maker of peace and prosperity, by fostering and developing good citizenship. State Socialism is the revival of old conceptions of the relation of the State to the individual, in a Christianized form, having a due regard to the existence of those rights of the individual which the old conceptions ignored.

State Socialism was adopted as a policy in a blind, experimental, and therefore most characteristic way in England when the first Factory Acts were passed ; and has been pursued, in a halting, tentative manner, but

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with increasing frequency, ever since.<sup>1</sup> It is in Germany that State Socialism has been raised to the dignity of a scientific theory. It has been shown that the founder of the Social Democratic party in Germany—Ferdinand Lassalle—was also, though quite unconsciously, the originator of State Socialism. A national, as distinguished from an international Socialist, Lassalle's demands for national workshops as a stepping-stone to a socialized State, and his keen and learned criticism of the orthodox political economy, impressed both German professors of political economy and German statesmen, especially Prince Bismarck. After an interview with Lassalle—during which he was very much taken with that brilliant personality and with his theories, as he once confessed in the Reichstag—Bismarck set to work to elaborate the policy of State Socialism. In doing this, both Bismarck and the Emperors have been greatly aided by the Katheder Socialists, or Socialists of the Chair, as the economists who repudiate 'Manchesterianism,' or 'Smithiasmus' (English orthodox political economy), are called. Professors Roscher, Wagner, Schmöller, and Schäffle have propounded a new system of political economy, or, rather, imported a new spirit into the old economy. They maintain that there is no finality in political economy; that it is but a deduction from industrial methods, which vary with the changing and advancing ethical standards of humanity. Henceforth it must be studied historically, it must be recognized that industry is a constant evolution. Moreover, the ethical factor, so far from being eliminated altogether, must be made supreme. The idea, for instance, 'of regarding labour-power as a commodity,

<sup>1</sup> See *Law and Public Opinion in England in the Nineteenth Century*. Professor A. V. Dicey. (Macmillan.)

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and wages as its price,' is, according to Professor Wagner, 'not only un-Christian, but is inhuman in the worst sense of the word.' The State is to be the active factor in inaugurating a better system of production, whereby there must be less irregularity in its course, profits must be shared more equitably, wealth distributed more evenly, and the conditions of labour, and the habits and prospects of the labourers, indefinitely improved. The administrative powers of the State are to be directed towards securing the moral, intellectual, sanitary, economic, and social advancement of the people. State Socialism is the 'gas-and-water' Socialism—the practical, piecemeal Municipal Socialism which grows increasingly familiar in England.

There will, indeed, be a great difference between German and English State Socialism. In England the power of self-government is much more highly developed. State Socialism here, therefore, will be less centralized and bureaucratic than in Germany—more local, parochial, and municipal. Government in Germany is largely absolute, paternal, almost grandmotherly. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Emperor of Germany has ventured upon schemes before which the English have hesitated, although the State in England is, to some extent, the people, and representative government is largely a reality. This latter fact ought to make the English step surer, not more hesitating, in the direction of State Socialism. For in prosecuting such measures as the State oversight of industrial pursuits, the State control of necessary commodities like land, coal, and minerals, or the State ownership of railways, it would not be, as in Germany, government from above, but government of the people by the people ; in a word, self-govern-

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ment—a self-government which, so far from being the foe of a healthy, well-developed Individualism, will serve both to foster and evoke it.

That this State Socialism is commending itself, not only to the working classes, who might naturally be expected to look upon it with favour, but also to middle-class statesmen and economists, may be seen on every hand. The leaders of the Progressive Party on the London County Council, in their early period, may be taken as types of the modern Municipal Socialist. The following passage from Mr. Henry Sidgwick's *Principles of Political Economy* proves that State and Municipal Socialism is not likely to be found contrary to economic science by even the representatives of the orthodox school. In his chapter on 'Economic Distribution,' Mr. Sidgwick says: 'As I have tried to show in an earlier part of this book, there are many departments in which both abstract theory and induction from experience combine to show very serious defects in the existing competitive organization of industry from the point of view of production no less than from that of distribution. I see no reason to regard *laissez-faire* as a political ideal from either point of view; and it seems to me quite possible that a very considerable extension of the industrial functions of government might be in every respect advantageous, without supposing any Utopian degree of moral or political improvement in human society.'



PART III  
CRITICAL





I  
THE CHRISTIAN  
CRITICISM OF  
SOCIALISM



# I

## THE CHRISTIAN CRITICISM OF SOCIALISM<sup>1</sup>

Socialism must wait the development of the Social Man.

WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

WHAT has Christianity to say to the demands of scientific Socialism? The answer to this question will determine the attitude of many Christians towards Socialism, and of many Socialists towards Christianity.

It will not avail Christians to say that Christianity is not dependent upon any form of human society, that its kingdom is not of this world, and that it can exist alike under the shadow of pagan Imperialism, of barbaric Feudalism, of greedy Capitalism, and of materialistic Socialism—that these exterior things are indifferent to it. There is enough truth in this to deceive many Christians into a mistaken apathy towards the new-world movement, and to dull many Christian consciences into the acceptance of economic evils which hinder the coming of Christ's kingdom. Christianity can exist under any form of government or human society, but never for an hour in its whole history has it failed to operate, silently

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Sheffield United Methodist Ministers' Fraternal, October 1895.

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perhaps, but steadily, against those forms which were imperfect or un-ideal. When the Christian Church has failed to do this, the Spirit of Christ has operated through other agencies. It is not a question of what Christianity can exist under ; it is a question of what it can flourish under ; and, without dispute, it is exceedingly hard for it to flourish under a form of society like the present.

Whatever Socialism is, or is not, it is a study of political economy and of industry from the standpoint of the human factor, not from that of the material factor ; from the standpoint of the workman, not from that of the capitalist ; of the weak, not the strong, human factor in it ; from that of the poor man, not from that of the rich. Christianity, therefore, should approach it sympathetically, wishing it all success in its theorizings and reconstructions. With its motive and its aim—the bettering of the social conditions of the multitudes, and, with that, their intellectual, moral, and spiritual condition also—Christianity must, in the very nature of things, be in the most hearty sympathy.<sup>1</sup>

It is often said that Christians, as such, have nothing to do with economic Socialism ; that it is a scheme for the reorganization of society, which must be dealt with by the economist and the sociologist ; that it may be very well meant, but, nevertheless, very ill calculated to remedy the ills which it is not alone in deploring, and that its merits can only be decided upon by experts in such matters. This is another specious argument for lulling the Christian conscience to sleep ; and it comes very gratefully to comfortably circumstanced Christians, and to those who conceive of Christianity as a religion purely or mainly introspective and other-worldly. But,

<sup>1</sup> See the writer's *Christianity and Socialism*. (F. Griffiths, 6d. net.)

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inasmuch as Socialism is the only complete theory of economic reconstruction in the field, and inasmuch as the present social system is, in many of its aspects, notoriously anti-Christian, and inasmuch also, as Socialism is full of moral implications, and may vitally affect the history of Christianity itself, it is surely impossible for Christians, as such, to maintain an attitude towards it of benevolent or hostile indifference.

This being so, it is worth while—abundantly worth while—to take a general view of Socialism, in the light of Christianity, as a theory of economic and social reconstruction.

There are three things about modern Socialism, at the very outset, to which Christians must take exception. The first is the Socialist appeal to physical force, for such an appeal exists in certain Socialist quarters. Christ frowned on all appeals to force for the purpose of spreading truth, despite His own action in the Temple; Tolstoi's expositions of Christ's teachings have surely made that clear, if the Quakers did not before him. His followers, then, must frown upon all appeals to force. In the degree in which, in the sad past, the Church herself has appealed to force, in that degree she has been un-Christian. The appeal to force is necessarily irrational and immoral; it cannot, moreover, in the long run, further any cause. To abolish private property, summarily and by force, would be at once unrighteous, irrational, and impolitic, and would plunge society into worse evils than those from which it would deliver it. Many Socialists, indeed, chiefly in England and France, are for evolution, and protest against war altogether; but the 'thorough'—and those intimately acquainted with Socialists know that these constitute a

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fair number of them, and include the leaders of a section even in England—the ‘thorough’ are for revolution and the appeal to arms ; of course, only when the hour is ripe. This appeal to force is not a necessity of Socialism ; its programme may be realized peacefully, but that, save in England, is not thought likely. Rodbertus put its realization five hundred years off, but those active and naturally impatient Socialists who wish to see its reign at least begun in their times are for the speedy application of force. With all such, Christians at once part company. Moral suasion, argument, prayer, and the use of constitutional and legislative means, are the only methods Christians dare use in the spread of truth and in re-organizing society. Force is to them, first of all, wrong, and, secondly, ineffective as a means of social reconstruction.

Then the attitude of some Socialists towards the family must be denounced. Christians can never support those who extend the doctrine of all things in common—to wives. They have been engaged in too long a struggle with human animalism and impurity to submit to see some of their best work undone. Here, again, many Socialists will repudiate any such notions ; but as long as leading Socialists, like Herr Bebel, Karl Pearson, and Belfort Bax, continue to advocate such doctrines, and numbers of the rank and file of Socialism are found embracing them, Christians must have an understanding. This understanding is the more necessary, as throughout the whole history of Socialism, from Owen, Saint-Simon, and Fourier, to Bebel and Bax, the same teaching has more or less tainted it. There is undoubtedly quite enough that is un-ideal in the relations of the sexes under our present laws ; but the Christian

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ideal of true, pure, human love between man and woman and lifelong monogamy is not responsible for any of them. 'Free love,' or unions and separations at will, and, as a necessary corollary, State support of mothers and State nurseries for children, mean the reign of animal passion and vice, the degradation of woman, and the abolition of family life. Socialists will have to drop all such so-called 'social philosophy' like hot coals if they wish to win the Christian ear. The decline in the birth-rate is not to be met that way. The animal instincts of men need restraint, not encouragement, and the Christian ideal of the family is necessary to the very existence of civilized communities.

The Christian who studies some Socialist writers grows concerned, not only at the prospect of violent revolution, and at the threatened fate of the family, but also at the fate of religion under Socialism; for those who have influence with Socialists clamour for the destruction of three things as obstacles in the way of realizing Socialism—the State, the Family, and the Church.

Socialism is professedly a theory for this world; this is its boast, yet it strangely thinks that this involves antagonism to religion; whereas, if there is anything needed for this world, it is religion. Unfortunately, the founders of economic Socialism were avowed and aggressive atheists and agnostics, and so are many of its modern leaders. Mr. R. Blatchford, of the *Clarion*, is a sample. Now, if one thing is certain, it is that Christ approves of no theory of civil life which rules out religion, which either ignores it or denies its validity. To the Lord Jesus, and therefore to Christians, religion is more real than all things else beside. If the inauguration of Socialism meant the secularization of mankind and its

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materialization, the stifling of its spiritual life and instincts, then, to speak moderately, whatever temporal comfort it might bring, to Christians it would be dear at the price. They will rather endure the ills they have, than fly to others that they know not of. A theory which threatens morality and religion threatens also the very existence of society. It will be said by some that these dreadful consequences are not at all involved in the theory of Socialism. They may not be necessarily and logically, and many modern English Socialists, like Keir Hardie, are Christians ; but the theory sprang from the noxious soil of Materialism, and is still identified in the minds of many militant Socialists with Materialism. There is no doubt at all about this in Germany, and little doubt about it in England. Socialism, being an international movement, will profess the same principles in every land.

If Socialists will shake themselves free from the idea of appealing to physical force, from their hostility to the family and to religion, Christians will look much more favourably upon them.

But it is easy to object to Socialism. Many Christians content themselves with that, and so lay themselves open to the retort that the only world in which they are interested is the other world, and that the sooner they betake themselves thither the better for humanity. Nevertheless, Christianity proper never has been, and never can be, indifferent to this present life, and that simply because it believes in another life, to which this life is essentially related. Therefore, Christians must seek for the good in Socialism as well as the evil, and strive to assimilate it. Now, as Dr. Flint says, 'There is nothing ethically valuable in Socialism which is not



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contained in Christianity. All its moral truths are Christian truths.' But some may still think that it has in it nothing ethically valuable, despite the enumeration of ethical values given at the outset. It will be wise, therefore, to pursue the subject a little further, from the Christian and ethical, as distinguished from the economic, standpoint.

To begin with, Socialism is a great cry for *justice*, whether articulate or not—for individual and for social justice. Surely the Christian should join the Socialist in his demand for justice—though the heaven, or, what is more likely, though the earth falls! It is no doubt a fallacy to affirm that labour is the source of all value; yet it is undeniable that the labour element in production is very much undervalued, and that, under our present system, whereby nearly half the national income goes to but one-ninth, and that not the labouring part, of the nation, the labourer does not obtain his fair share of the products of industry. He may be better off than he was fifty years ago—which is, after all, saying very little; he no doubt would be better off if he drank less intoxicating drink and gambled less—but still he does not obtain his fair share of the product, and Christian justice demands that he should, whatever he does with it. That the labourer is treated with injustice is no mere Socialist assertion, but an industrial, economic, and political fact. The labourer is at a vast disadvantage in economic bargaining, and is also the victim of a defective and often immoral system of production and distribution. The Socialist doctrine of surplus value, despite the assertions of hostile critics, does not depend, although Marx made it to depend, upon a mistaken labour-doctrine of value. The existence of Fabian

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Socialism demonstrates that. It is an economic fact that the workman is deprived of his fair share of the product—a fact admitted by the new English economists. Socialism is a theory of economic reconstruction which proposes to remedy this injustice, and, whether successful or not, should be regarded with sympathy, not hostility, by Christians, even though it may threaten the vested interests of the few. The need of England at this hour is such a measure of social change as will secure justice to the toilers of the land.

Christians must sympathize also with the Socialist cry for *equality*. Not, of course, for literal equality, levelling either up or down to an unnatural and undesirable uniformity. Socialism makes no such foolish demand, although critics, who ought to know better, are always attributing such a demand to it. The knocking down of this man of straw occupies no small part of the time of the critics of Socialism. Socialism would reorganize society upon a basis of equality in labour—that all should labour, either with hands or brain, preferably with both, and all enjoy the fruits of their labours. At present society is organized upon the basis of wealth and private property. Socialists would make it impossible for there to be any social drones, either above or beneath. There should be, further, according to Socialism, an equality of opportunity, each having an equal chance of cultivating and developing his faculties ; and also equality before the law, both in its making and its administration. These are just and Christian demands, and any form of society which delivers us from one largely based on wealth, with its cruel and unjust inequalities in these particular respects, must be welcome to Christians. It is a Christian declaration that if any will not work neither

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shall he eat. The Socialist's desire to make every consumer a producer also, and so be no burden upon, but rather a helper of, human society, is pre-eminently Christian. The difficulties of organizing and administering such a society surely do not surpass either the wit or the capacity of man—nay, it is certain that what man ought to do, that he finally can do.

The other great cry of Socialism is for *brotherhood*—the most Christian of cries. There can be no real brotherhood in a society, perhaps not based upon, yet really working upon, the lines of selfish competition; every day demonstrates that afresh. There was often more possibility of brotherhood in the days of slavery and serfdom, when the master and man were not put into competition, than in times when their interests are artificially made to conflict. Where men live as rivals and enemies—the strong oppressing the weak, the wise taking advantage of the ignorant, one man using another simply as a means to his own selfish ends, one or a few men treating whole companies of their brother men as ‘hands,’ not living beings—the realization of brotherhood is impossible. Christians must not only desire, but work for, the reconstruction of a form of society in which such evils are inherent. Industrial competition must be superseded by industrial co-operation. The only competition permissible between brothers, at least upon a large scale, is how to serve society best, not each other worst. The secret of the true development of the individual is love and service, not dislike and rivalry. Neither the interests of the individual nor the interests of society can be secured by every man looking solely upon his own things, despite all the economists in the world; this may be orthodox political economy, but it is atrociously

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heterodox Christianity. The Socialist who demands brotherhood in industry is far nearer the mind of Christ than the economist who clamours for 'free' competition.

Professor Flint says that Socialism succeeds to the extent it does by the very lowness of its ideal; that it is all commonplace, definite, easy of comprehension, its standard merely one of material comfort. This is a strange judgement. Socialism really makes immense demands upon human nature—greater demands than it will ever rise to unassisted by the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. So far from realizing its programme apart from religion, the Socialists should make friends with Christianity at once. The social man is to be evolved—a man unselfish, public-spirited, conscientious, incorruptible, industrious, high-minded, and refined in tastes and pleasures. The evolution of this man is possible only to religion; there will never be any socialized production and distribution until there are at least latent in society the germs of the social man.

Some modification or adaptation of Socialism is a necessity to the higher life of the community, and if Socialism will only eliminate all morally obnoxious features, as well as all economic fallacies, from its programme, Christianity will clasp hands with it; for a purified Socialism is simply an industrially applied Christianity.

II  
THE LABOUR  
THEORY OF  
VALUE



## II

### THE LABOUR THEORY OF VALUE<sup>1</sup>

Value comes not out of the workshop where goods come into existence, but out of the wants which those goods will satisfy.—  
BÖHM-BAWERK.

THERE is no economic subject upon which the working men of England ought to try more to have clear ideas than the subject of value. This is no merely speculative question ; for in every market-place men stand up and say that the wealth of this country is created by labour, and ought to be in the possession of the labourers. The fundamental principle of all Karl Marx's reasoning is that labour is the sole source of value. Now, if that be granted or proved, the social question is, at any rate intellectually, at an end. All that remains to be done is to see that labour has its rights, which are the possession of all things valuable ; for if labour is the sole source of value, then the stump-orators are logical—everything of value belongs to the labourers. All who are not producers or necessary to production exist only on sufferance, and are a tax on industry.

The labour doctrine of value was taken by Marx from

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Fabian Society of Socialists, Chester, June 3, 1893.

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Adam Smith and Ricardo, the founders of the science of political economy, and especially from the latter. Well might Marx speak of it from his point of view in the following language : 'The recent scientific discovery that the products of labour, so far as they are values, are but material expressions of human labour spent in their production, marks indeed an epoch in the history of the human race.'

Ricardo's language seems definite enough, as the following quotation will show : 'Gold is fifteen times dearer than silver, not because there is a greater demand for it, nor because the supply of silver is fifteen times greater than that of gold, but solely because fifteen times the quantity of labour is necessary to procure a given quantity of it.' Locke, Petty, and Adam Smith had taught the same doctrine before, incredible though it may seem.

It is now maintained that Ricardo was misunderstood. Ricardo was a financier, who looked at economic subjects from the standpoint of the City man. He always addressed his arguments to an imaginary audience of experts. He was a master of abstract argument, a logical thinker of great originality ; he was obscure in expression, and not only obscure, but greatly condensed. His style was singularly difficult, and his doctrines the barest abstractions. Ricardo always took it for granted that the imaginary audience of experts he addressed would make all those common-sense allowances and qualifications in his doctrines which he himself did not stay to make.

But writing when he did, at the moment when we in England needed a science of political economy, his doctrines were seized upon with avidity by those who



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were not experts, and applied to real life in the crudest manner. It became an accepted doctrine that labour was the sole source of value and wealth, and was diligently applied in the interests of those who wished to free labour from all mediaeval restrictions ; it was used to create free trade in labour—an event which meant slavery for the labourer and fortune for the capitalist. Some modern economists of note declare that Ricardo never meant that labour was the only source of value. Professor Marshall, in his *Principles of Economics*, says that ‘it would have been better if Ricardo had occasionally repeated the statement that the value of two commodities are to be regarded as in the long run proportionate to the amount of labour required for making them, only on the condition that other things are equal ; that is, that the labour employed in the two cases is equally skilled, and therefore equally highly paid ; that it is assisted by proportionate amounts of capital, account being taken of the period of its investment ; and that the rates of profit are equal.’ These qualifications Ricardo left his readers to make, and they seldom made them. Professor Böhm-Bawerk goes further than Professor Marshall. He says that ‘Ricardo so narrows the sphere within which it [the labour doctrine of value] is valid, and surrounds it with such important exceptions that it is scarcely justifiable to assert that he has represented labour as the universal and exclusive principle of value. Ricardo begins his *Principles* with the express assertion that the exchange value of goods has its origin in two sources—in their scarcity and in the labour their production cost. Even in the latter case he admits that exchange value is not determined exclusively by labour ; that time also—

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the time elapsing between the advancing of the labour and the realizing of the finished product—has a considerable influence on it.’ So that Marx’s doctrine, and that of Social Democrats generally, would seem to be based upon an incomplete understanding of Ricardo.

The main point, of course, is not whether Ricardo taught this doctrine—although it was undeniably rife at the time Rodbertus, Lassalle, and Marx wrote, and, after doing yeoman service for capital, was, to the consternation and chagrin of the capitalists, turned suddenly and daringly by these Socialists into an argument for labour—but whether it be true or false.

If it be true, then capital and property are robbery, and the doctrine of surplus value has a foundation both in logic and fact. If it be false, Socialism will have to moderate its claims and make less sweeping demands.

There is little doubt, however, that the labour theory of value, especially as defined by Marx, has been torn to shreds by English and Continental economists, especially by the latter. The subject is too technical to be pursued closely here, but reference may be made to the treatment of it by the Austrian economist, Professor Böhm-Bawerk. He says that ‘they [the Socialists] could find no argument for it in the nature of things, for that showed no necessary connexion whatever between value and labour, neither in experience nor in authority.’ Neither Adam Smith nor Ricardo attempted to prove this doctrine, and of Karl Marx’s attempt to prove it, Böhm-Bawerk says that ‘scarcely anywhere else were to be found together so great a number of the worst fallacies, wanton, unproved assertions, self-contradictions, and blindness to facts.’

Any one who has carefully perused Böhm-Bawerk’s

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examination of the Socialist theory of value, in his *Capital and Interest*, and other works, will admit that, so far as this theory is concerned, the Marxian Socialists have not much ground left upon which to stand.

It is important to remember that value does not arise from the process of production at all. There are three factors in production—land, labour, and capital. No one of these can create value, yet in the history of political economy the power of creating value has most confidently been ascribed to each of the three in turn. But, as Böhm-Bawerk remarks, ‘value is not produced, and cannot be produced. What is produced is never anything but forms, shapes of material, combinations of material; therefore things, goods. These goods can, of course, be goods of value, but they do not bring value with them ready-made, as something inherent which accompanies production.’ So, again, ‘the privilege of creating value belongs as little to human labour as to any other factor (of production). Labour, like Capital, creates goods, and goods only.’ Of course, without goods there could be no value, but there might be—indeed, there often are—goods which not only have no exchange value, but are without even use-value. The production of goods themselves is not the result of land, labour, or capital alone, but of the three in co-operation.

Value arises from the wants of consumers, not from the labours of producers. Products have value only in so far as they have social utility. As before pointed out, Marx perceived this, but strangely failed to see that it has a vital bearing upon the nature of value. Böhm-Bawerk says that ‘products always receive value first from outside, from the wants and satisfactions of

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the economic world. Value grows, not out of the past of goods, but out of their future. It comes not out of the workshop, where goods come into existence, but out of the wants which those goods satisfy.' The doctrine propounded by Böhm-Bawerk might be called the utility theory of value, and is the one now generally accepted. It is not his own creation, but was formulated, simultaneously, but independently, in England by Professor Stanley Jevons, and in Austria by Professor Menger. It seems to account for the facts more completely than any other.

The economic fact which has given rise to the labour theory of value is the coincidence which sometimes exists between exchange-value and the cost of production.

In 1884 Mr. P. H. Wicksteed wrote in *To-day* that 'a coincidence exists between the exchange-value of ordinary manufactured goods and the amount of labour contained.' From this he maintained that labour was at least the standard or measure of value for such articles. His Socialist colleagues in England refused to see in this suspicious 'coincidence' anything save the relation of cause and effect, and additional support for the labour doctrine of value. But, as Böhm-Bawerk points out, this coincidence is deceptive. 'So long as the costs themselves are in harmony with the usefulness or scarcity of the goods, so long do they remain in harmony with their value and appear to regulate it.' In reality it is not the cost of production which regulates the value of goods, but the value of them which regulates the cost of their production. The labour doctrine of value simply reverses the true order of things.

Labour, indeed, affects value when it affects supply ; prices rise and fall according as supply falls and rises.

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As Professor Jevons says, 'The labour spent upon producing a commodity does not affect the value of a commodity unless it alters the quantity of it.' Perhaps, also, the quality of it. But even here the value comes not from labour, but from the wants or satisfactions of the consuming community.

Whilst it is true that there is a coincidence between the value of many articles and the cost of their production, the exceptions are too numerous for any such doctrine as the labour doctrine of value to be based upon it. Labour does not give scarce goods their value—rare pictures, rare editions, old coins, and such objects of desire. Perhaps the hackneyed 'wine' illustration best exposes the fallacy of this doctrine. The value of wine when first put down into a wine-cellar is very much less than its value, say, twelve or twenty years later, at least to wine-drinkers or wine-connoisseurs. If labour is the sole source of value, then labour must be the secret of this increase of value. But no labour has been expended upon it; the wine has lain still in the cellar untouched and unvisited, yet increased exchange-value has accrued each year. Therefore the labour doctrine of value is wrong, for here is a typical instance of value which labour could by no possibility affect. The same holds true of timber; labour cannot possibly have anything to do with the difference in exchange-value between an oak-tree one year old and the same tree a hundred years old. A nugget of gold found at once, without any labour, by a fortunate prospector, could not derive its value, despite Ricardo, from any labour in connexion with it, for there has been none; nor from the labour usually needed to extract gold from the rocks, for gold is easier to 'produce' than coal or lead, and yet

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it is much more valuable. Labour cannot account for the value of the goods produced by skilled labour. Karl Marx tried to prove that skilled labour was only common labour multiplied, but signally failed in his enterprise. A sculptor, an engineer, and a dock labourer may work the same number of hours per day, and with equal diligence, and relatively equal ability; but the value of their respective products—which, according to the labour theory of value, should be equal—will be found to be very different. Böhm-Bawerk affirms that ‘the only goods left to the action of the law (that the labour costs are the measure of value) are those goods which can be produced at will, without any limitations, and which at the same time require nothing but unskilled labour for their production, and even these fluctuate in their value.’

Böhm-Bawerk declares that, ‘shut up in his labour theory, Marx, like Rodbertus, fails to grasp the idea that time also has an influence on value. Marx repeats the mistake of Rodbertus, claiming now, in the name of justice, the value of the finished product as it will be then.’ Böhm-Bawerk makes this plain by a very convincing illustration, that of a steam-engine, which costs five years of labour, and when completed realizes the price of £550.

Suppose that five different mechanics made five separate parts of the engine, and contributed a year’s work each, in due succession, until the engine was completed, what would be the just share of each partner in the construction? Certainly not £110 each—not by dividing the £550 into five equal parts. The first man would have to wait four years before he could obtain his financial share, whereas the last man would not have to wait at all. ‘To find labourers ready to take the pre-

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paratory stages, then, the labourers of the final stages would be compelled to grant their colleagues who prepared the work a larger share in the final value of the product as compensation for the postponement.' The following would be the fair shares : The first man (who waits four years), £120 ; the second (three years), £115 ; the third (two years), £110 ; the fourth (one year), £105 ; the fifth (none), £100 ; in all, £550.

Now, suppose that the mechanics cannot wait, but contract with a middleman to pay them at once, he becoming the owner of the steam-engine, which would have the value of £550 to him when made. How much ought he in justice to pay them each ? When they work on their own account, it has been seen to be just to pay the man who has not to wait at all for his money the sum of £100 for his year's labour. The middleman will be just, then, in doing what they themselves would do ; he therefore pays them each £100, i.e. he pays in all to five men £500 ; but the engine when sold brings him in £550 ! He therefore makes a profit of £50 on the transaction. This is a perfectly just profit ; there has been no exploitation of labour ; the surplus-value has not been stolen by the capitalist from labour ; indeed, he has served their interests and risked, or at least locked-up, his capital, as well as waited for years for reimbursement. Whence, then, comes the enhanced value of the engine ? It comes, not from labour, but from time, from the wants of consumers, whereby the present value of future goods is less than that of present goods. This excellent illustration answers the double purpose of showing that value does not arise from labour, and that surplus-value taken by the capitalist is not necessarily an exploitation of labour. The labourer

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has evidently no right to the whole value of the product ; he has a right to his share of it, for he has only a share in it. How to determine that share, and whether he usually receives his share, are both grave and difficult questions, beside the present point.

It will clear the air somewhat, then, when all parties, especially the workmen, realize that, as Böhm-Bawerk says, the rise of surplus-value 'is a law which owes its existence, not to our political and social institutions, but directly to the nature of man and the nature of things.'

It remains to consider what effect this refutation of the labour doctrine of value has upon economic Socialism. Undoubtedly it is the chief corner-stone in the economic structure of Marx, both in his own opinion and in that of many of his principal critics. For instance, Dr. Schäffle says that on this account Marx's Socialism 'is quite incapable of solving the problem of production with collective capital which it propounds, on any really sound economic basis. As long as Socialism has not something quite other than this, and more positive, to offer, it has no chance.' By more 'positive' Dr. Schäffle must mean more scientific or certain, for Socialists do not suffer from any lack of positiveness. Dr. Schäffle says in another place that 'the bare labour-cost value, as it has been formulated up to now, invests the whole economy of Socialism for the present with the character of a Utopia.' It can be easily understood, however, that the doctrine is too valuable for the purposes of agitation to be soon given up. Hence many Marxian Socialists still adhere to the labour doctrine of value. Some do it, doubtless, in their ignorance, but others despite criticism. Amongst the latter we have Mr.



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Hyndman, who is prepared to meet all comers in defence of this doctrine.

But all Socialists are not so foolish as to kick against the pricks ; the Fabian Socialists, being mainly middle-class Socialists and educated men, have long since (a score of years since) discarded Marx's theory of value in favour of the utility theory of value. They hold that Socialism is not dependent upon any value theory, and in this are supported by independent economists like Professor William Smart, who says : ' Böhm-Bawerk's refutation of the exploitation theory is not a refutation of Socialism, but of a certain false economic doctrine assumed by a great social economist as a negative basis for that social, industrial, and political reconstruction of things called Socialism.' Dr. Schäffle and Dr. Flint want to nail the Socialists down to Marx's labour theory of value, and then, by exploding it, maintain that they have exploded Socialism. But Socialism is not so easily got rid of. Years ago a letter appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* signed by seven Socialists, including Dr. Aveling, Belfort Bax, William Morris, and H. M. Hyndman, avowing their allegiance to Marx's theory of value, but it evoked a letter from Mr. Bernard Shaw disavowing it in the name of the Fabian Socialists. In that letter Mr. Shaw made several statements which show the folly of attempting to make the Socialist movement stand or fall with the labour theory of value. He said : ' The section in the *Fabian Essays* which deals with the theory of value is pure Jevons, without a word of Marx. The implication that the overwhelming majority of English Socialists, attached or unattached, know the difference between the two value theories in question, or that as many as one per cent. of them are economic

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experts to that extent, is a piece of bunkum. English Socialism is quite abreast of the time in its economics, and the general abandonment of the old capitalist theory that commodities exchange according to the labour expended in producing them, with its obvious corollary, *laissez-faire*, has left Socialism theoretically stronger than ever.'

The doctrine of surplus-value is quite independent of the labour theory of value. Surplus-value is inevitable in industry, Capitalistic or Socialistic; without it there could be no profit—and the question whether it is appropriated at present to an unjust degree is one for industrial historians, financial statisticians, economists, and statesmen to decide. No weakness in Marx's theory of value can impair the truth and importance of his revelation—for revelation it was—of the innate tendencies of the capitalistic system of industry to exploit the labourer, or can retard materially the movement for the socialization of production and distribution. That movement is a necessary stage in the evolution of industry, and, having now come into the consciousness of mankind, will be accelerated by all the intellectual and moral resources of humanity. So that the main economic analysis of Marx still stands, despite the breakdown in his theory of value.

The true theory of value is, perhaps, not yet formulated. Professor Jevons announced his theory in these words: 'Repeated reflection and inquiry have led me to the somewhat novel opinion that value depends entirely upon utility.' Professor Marshall declares that to be as one-sided and misleading a statement as Ricardo's. Nevertheless, Jevons' (and Menger's) theory holds the field, viz. that exchange value is derived from social demand, and decreases with supply, being determined

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by the least useful part of the stock, or, in economic language, by its 'final utility.' The truth about the law of value (avoiding all technicalities) is, that it is determined by the law of supply and demand. The question of supply involves labour as a necessary element in the production of what may become values, and this makes labour very important in relation to value. The question of demand involves utility as a source of value, and this, again, involves time as an element in value. This theory of value, which makes surplus-value inevitable, is an encouragement to hasten on, with all discretion, the socialization of industry ; for it is a pure matter of social expediency whether to permit the individual or the community to reap the harvest of surplus-value which grows from sowing, which is as much social as individual.

Every friend of the Labour movement must have often wished that the labour doctrine of value were an economic truth. It would greatly simplify the social question, and make it easier to reconstruct society upon just lines. However, truth is truth, and must be accepted. But no change in value doctrines can diminish the place and importance of labour in production. It will ever stand the most important of the three factors—greater than land and than capital, because the only purely human element of the three. Whatever becomes of the labour doctrine of value, it still remains true that the labour factor in production—the chief factor—has been grossly neglected. It has often been defrauded of its rights. It has been denied, upon a vast scale, because the labourer has been ignorant and economically weak, its fair share of the product. But a brighter day begins to dawn for Labour. The labourer is becoming educated and organized, and able to speak

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himself with the enemy in the gate. He has champions also amongst Christian ministers, statesmen, economists, novelists, and other educated men, and is fast coming to his own. He has friends even amongst the capitalists themselves, and, as Mr. Benjamin Kidd has pointed out, this is perhaps the most hopeful sign of all ; for when there are searchings of heart in the very camp of the enemy, victory is not distant.

III  
ON THE TAKING  
OF INTEREST



## ON THE TAKING OF INTEREST

He rails

On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,  
Which he calls interest.—*Merchant of Venice.*

Is it right to take interest? 'What a preposterous question!' some will say. 'Of course it is; everybody does it. Where should we be if we did not? Of what use would be our stocks and shares, our banks and bankers, and what would become of business, capital, and the money market?' What, indeed! Nevertheless, the consciences of many are troubled about the matter; they have refrained from taking interest, and have, *ad interim*, reverted to the old stocking. Nor are these scrupulous ones as simple as they seem, for a very brief study of the subject reveals the fact that our practice of interest-taking, dividend-dividing, and rent-receiving is, in Christendom, of comparatively modern origin, and was not established without struggle and protest. History repeats itself, and again in a time of economic change and reconstruction re-arises this old-time question: Is it right to take interest? The question is grave and fundamental; it deals with a first principle of modern economic life—'in interest lies the crux of the

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entire economic question'; but if the human conscience condemn it, it must disappear, even though it involves the entire economic reorganization of the community. What is to be said for and against the taking of interest?

It will be a shock to many to learn that in the Bible it is forbidden. It is explicitly condemned in the Old Testament, and implicitly in the New. 'Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase' (Lev. xxv. 37). 'Lord! who shall abide in Thy tabernacle, who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? . . . He that putteth not out his money to usury' (Ps. xv. 1, 5). Jesus Christ says: 'Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again.' Surely, if we are not to expect back our principal, we must not demand interest. The only place in the New Testament where interest is directly mentioned is in the Parable of the Talents, where it is neither approved nor disapproved, but merely used by Christ for purposes of illustration. But some man will say, 'The Bible does not condemn interest; it only condemns *usury*, or exorbitant interest.' If that be so, then in the Parable of the Talents, where He speaks of 'receiving His own with *usury*,' our Lord means excessive interest, and so contradicts both His own words in the Sermon on the Mount and those of the Old Testament. Such a man had better read his Revised New Testament. The Greek word *τόκος*, there rendered 'usury,' means simply 'interest.' The Hebrew words *marbith* and *neshek*, rendered 'usury' in the above-quoted passages, mean any interest on money or goods, moderate or excessive. Why, then, render these Greek and Hebrew words for 'interest' by the word 'usury'? Because in Elizabethan English 'usury' simply meant what we mean by 'interest.' The



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word, then, held its original Latin meaning—‘payment for the *use* of money,’ from *usura*, use. Any good dictionary will reveal this fact. The word ‘usury’ frequently occurs in Elizabethan writers in the sense of ‘interest.’ Lord Bacon writes : ‘Since there must be borrowing and lending, and men are so hard of heart as they will not lend freely, *usury* must be permitted.’ William Harrison, in *Holinshed’s Chronicles*, speaks of ‘*usury*, a trade brought in by the Jews, now perfectly practised almost by every Christian, and so commonly that he is accounted a fool that doth lend his money *for nothing*.’ In *The Merchant of Venice* ‘interest’ and ‘usury’ are used interchangeably. Shylock complains of Antonio that ‘he lends out money gratis, and so brings down the rate of *usance*’; that he calls his ‘well-won thrift’ *interest*; that he is ‘wont to call me *usurer*’; that he lends money ‘for a Christian courtesy.’ So that it is quite clear that the Elizabethan word ‘usury’ meant what the Greek and Hebrew words mean—viz. interest. It is equally clear that the Bible condemns interest in any form—not only excessive interest, or what *we* term usury, but any interest at all.

It is as surprising to the confirmed believer in interest as it is true that for the first fifteen hundred years of her history the Christian Church joined the Scriptures in condemning interest; it was under ban and bane in early and mediæval Christendom. Only during these last three hundred years, since the rise of modern commercialism, has the Church permitted interest as morally lawful. The early Fathers all condemned it; the mediæval theologians condemned it; Pope Alexander III, in the Council of Lateran, prohibited the taking of any interest for money. Dante puts the

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interest-taker in hell, and discourses on the nature of his sin. Many of the theologians of the Reformation also condemned it. 'Usury,' says Mr. Lecky, 'according to the unanimous teaching of the old theologians, consisted of any interest that was exacted by the lender from the borrower solely as the price of the loan ; those who lent money at three per cent. were committing usury quite as really as those who lent it at forty per cent.' Right up to the Reformation the loan of money upon interest was regarded by the Christian Church as an illicit way of acquiring wealth—hence, partly, its persecution of the Jews. After the Reformation a division of opinion appeared, induced partly by the emancipation of reason, and partly by the pressure of economical and commercial development. Melancthon and others supported the ancient doctrine of the Church ; Calvin and others the lawfulness of moderate interest. Bishop Jewel, one of the fathers of English Protestantism, was the last English divine to condemn it. Mr. Lecky, in his *Rationalism in Europe*, says that the early Church simply adopted 'all the pagan notions of the iniquity of money-lending.' This is hardly a correct account. The Church was against interest, both because the genius of Christianity was against mere money-making and because the Scriptures were against it. These latter they interpreted upon literal, unhistorical principles, and therefore, in simple consistency, could do no other than condemn interest. However, it is quite true that, looking about for arguments with which to sustain the authority of the Church and the decrees of Councils, the Canonists found an ally in Aristotle.

Aristotle, in the first book of the *Politics*, had condemned interest (τόκος) on the ground that it had not its

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origin in nature, but amongst ourselves. Hence it had received the name of produce (from *τίκτω*, I beget). 'Interest is merely money born of money.' Aristotle had maintained that money was naturally sterile, and that interest was detestable and illegitimate, because it made 'barren money breed money.' The Schoolmen, who were great Aristotelians, seized upon this argument with avidity, and urged it in support of the Church. Dante reveals the influence of Aristotle's argument when, in the *Inferno* (Canto xi.), he condemns interest on the ground that what is produced neither by nature nor art is immoral, and expressly refers his readers to the 'Stagirite.' There are traces, also, of this argument in Shakespeare. In *The Merchant of Venice* he makes Shylock refer to Jacob's manipulation of Laban's flock in his own favour as a worthy precedent for himself.

*Ant.* Was this inserted to make interest good?  
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?  
*Shy.* I cannot tell : I make it breed as fast.

Mr. Lecky calls this 'breeding' argument an 'absurdity of Aristotle,' and says 'it is a curious illustration of the longevity of a sophism when expressed in a terse form, and sheltered by a great name,' and goes on to remark that Bentham was the first to explode it. Here he is wrong, for if it has ever been exploded it was exploded three hundred and fifty years before Jeremy Bentham, and that by John Calvin, who held 'that it is undoubted that money does not produce money; but with money land is bought, which produces more than the returns for the labour applied to it, and which gives a surplus income to the proprietor after all expenses for wages and other things have been met. Objects with which things can

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be bought producing income by themselves can certainly be considered as bringing income themselves.' This remorseless logic—which, however, plays into the hand of Socialist objectors to interest—must have told in its time, for slowly the voice of the Church was silenced, and the practice of taking interest grew with the growth of commerce and capitalism, becoming universal and unquestioned until this day.

One of the most interesting things in connexion with this subject is the part the Jews take in it. First they give us, in the Hebrew Scriptures, the earliest condemnation of it; then, in the course of centuries, they appear, contrary to both the letter and the spirit of their law, as the money-lenders and financiers of Europe—of mediaeval Europe in the Jewries of Seville, Florence, Venice, and London; of modern Europe in the banks of the Rothschilds. Now, as if in penance for the violation of their law, and to repair the harm done to the people of Europe, appear two men of Jewish descent, Lassalle and Karl Marx, the fathers of modern Socialism, to condemn, and deliver us from, the tyranny of capital and interest. So far from admitting Mr. Lecky's venturesome statement that Aristotle had committed an absurdity in maintaining that money is sterile, Karl Marx, in *Capital*, contends that it is a proof of the insight and humanity of Aristotle, and that it is entirely true. The Marxian school also maintains that money is barren and cannot breed, and that the children it calls its own are not its own, but are those of Labour. In other words, interest is wrung from the labouring poor. This, of course, proceeds upon the theory that all value is due to labour, and that therefore the profits out of which the employer pays interest are due to the appropriation by

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the employer of the surplus value produced by the labourers. So that even when money is invested in a successful company, or lent to the well-to-do, who apparently can well afford to pay interest, that interest or dividend is really, however complex the process, stolen or exploited from the poor. Hence such passages as the following in the Fabian *Essays on Socialism*: 'The livelihood of the typical capitalist is obtained without any contribution of his or her activity, in the form of a pension called rent, interest, or dividend, guaranteed by law out of the wealth produced from day to day by the activities of the proletariat.' And again: 'The perpetual toll of rent and interest deprives the workers of the wealth which their activities produce.' In all this the Socialists find an ally in Ruskin.

In *Fors Clavigera*; or, *Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain*, Mr. Ruskin roundly condemned interest. To him it was unjust, uneconomical, un-Christian. Unfortunately, he deprived his words of weight, and aroused both the mirth and wrath of the profane, by naïvely admitting that nevertheless he himself received interest upon his own investments. The grounds upon which he objects to interest were never more forcibly put by him than in a letter written from Florence in 1874, and published in *Igdrasil*: 'Interest is always either usury on loan or tax on industry. I get interest either by lending or investing. If I take interest on investment, I tax industry. . . . To make money either by lending or taxing is a sin. If people really ought to have money lent, do it gratis. . . . Interest of money is, in a word, a tax by the idle on the busy, and by the rogue on the honest. Not one farthing of it is ever made by interest. Get that well

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into your head. It is all taken by the idle rich out of the pockets of the poor, or of the really active persons in commerce.' This is delightful dogmatism; it is the essential teaching of the Socialists, and could not be better expressed by the most extreme Marxian.

This, then, is a hasty and condensed historical *résumé* of the case against interest. It is evident that the list of authorities is weighty. Against interest are the Bible, the early and mediaeval Church, Aristotle, the Socialist economists, and Ruskin. For interest we have, indeed, the custom of commercialism and Christendom these past three hundred years, the science of orthodox political economy, and the wonderful growth of commerce and wealth, with the accompanying advance in the productive and distributive powers of men, due to the help and stimulus of the reigning system of capital and interest. But that system has generated such vast evils and such unjust inequalities that, led by the new economists, many are faltering in their faith in the interest system, and are regarding with new attention the attitude of the Bible, the early Church, and Aristotle, towards the subject. A new champion of interest has, however, arisen.

Professor Böhm-Bawerk, the product of the Austrian school of political economy which has made its own the theory of value and its allied problems, has dealt with the question of interest from an entirely new standpoint. In his first work, entitled *Capital and Interest*, he criticizes the chief theories of interest. These are mainly five.

The 'Productivity Theory,' which attributes interest to the productive power of capital, Böhm-Bawerk dismisses as confusing quantity of product with value of product.

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The problem of capital is a problem of surplus value, and value does not come from the side of production, but from the side of consumption. Capital is productive, but interest is not its product. The 'Fructification Theory,' that the gifts of nature are fruitful, and that capital has, by exchange, the power of obtaining a derivative fruitfulness, is condemned, as explaining by something which is itself a part of the phenomenon which we start to explain. The 'Use Theory,' that interest is the price paid for the use of capital, the theory most generally held, is found equally untenable. It bases interest, which is an income obtained from all kinds of capital, on an analogy drawn from one special kind of capital, viz. durable goods. It is also based upon the separation of the body and soul of capital—which is a fiction. The 'Abstinence Theory' is also due to a confusion of thought. Abstinence from immediate consumption will account for the owner having a sum to lend, but not for that sum growing three per cent. larger in a year's time. The 'Labour Theory'—that of the Socialists, that interest is simply a gain from exploited labour—is shown by Böhm-Bawerk to be a theory which could only arise on the negative basis of the unsatisfactory accounts hitherto given, and on the positive basis of a mistaken value theory, viz. that labour alone is the source of value. When an income, obtained without work and without risk, was claimed as the reward of abstinence, and when all value was ascribed to the action of material labourers, it was inevitable that there should rise a reactionary theory proving that interest was robbery. Having, with much mastery and lucidity, and with most brilliant logical fence, cleared his ground, Professor Böhm-Bawerk pro-

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ceeds, in another volume, *The Positive Theory of Capital and Interest*, to state, defend, test, and apply in every direction his own theory of interest.

This may be called the 'Time Theory.' Starting with the theory of value, formulated by Jevons and Menger, that value is determined by final or marginal utility, Böhm-Bawerk affirms 'that present goods have a higher subjective value, and thus a higher price, than future goods of like kind and number'; hence arises an agio, premium, or interest. Men's estimate of goods present differs from their estimate of goods future; time is not indifferent to our valuation of what we want. Present goods have an agio in future goods, and this agio is interest. Interest is an addition necessarily made when capital is replaced, if the capital now is to be equivalent to the capital then. As the agio in foreign exchanges only equalizes values for different places, so interest only equalizes values for different times. This higher estimate of goods present is natural and inevitable. It arises from (1) *differences in want and provision for want*, as in cases of immediate distress, or where the future is secure; (2) *the under-estimate of the future*, common to all men in different degrees, and that (a) from want of imagination, (b) from defect of will, (c) from the uncertainty of life; (3) *the technical superiority of present goods*. These three factors combine to give present goods superior value, and thus to create interest. 'The needy and the careless value present goods more highly because they more urgently require them in the present, or only think about the present; the well-off and the saving value them because they can accomplish more with them in the future; and thus, in the long run, every one—whatever his economic position, and what-



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ever his economic temperament—has some ground for valuing present goods more highly than future. And, further, it is easy to understand how much the emergence of subjective differences in valuation must favour the extension of these phenomena to the sphere of exchange value and price.' This is the 'Time Theory' of interest in brief—a theory new, indeed, yet so simple, so clear, so obviously true, that, as with other discoveries, the wonder is that it was not made before.

But Professor Böhm-Bawerk carries the war into the enemy's country when he proceeds to show, with convincing force, that not only is the labour theory of interest wrong, but that, if ever the Socialist ideal is realized—viz. the possession of the means of production and distribution by the State—interest will still arise. 'Even here, as time does not stand still, future<sup>1</sup> goods becoming present ones, and bringing a surplus value with them, the causes of interest would still be active. Indeed, under Socialism, the State, which would buy on a large scale the future good—labour—would exploit the labourers, perhaps, to divide out the amount more equitably, but still to divide it, as interest, not as wage. . . . The fact that the owners of present commodities, in exchanging them for future commodities, obtain an *agio*, Socialism neither will nor can alter. Interest is not an accidental "historico-legal" category, which makes its appearance only in our individualist and capitalist society, and will vanish with it; but an economic category which springs from elementary economic causes, and therefore, without distinction of social organization and legislation, makes its appearance wherever there is an exchange between present and future goods.'

Böhm-Bawerk is not unmindful of the abuses con-

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nected with interest. He admits that, while there is nothing essentially unreasonable or unjust in interest, it is, 'perhaps, to a greater extent than other human institutions,' open to abuse. Labour, for instance, suffers from its lack of present good. Capital can wait, Labour cannot. In selling his future good—labour-power—the labourer is at a double disadvantage; he is compelled to sell because of his need of present goods, and he is but one of a vast number also competing for the present good of the capitalist. Hence low wages forcibly exploited from the workers, and hence also direct usury. 'It is undeniable,' says Böhm-Bawerk, 'that, in the exchange of present commodities against future, the circumstances are of such a nature as to threaten the poor with the exploitation of monopolists.' Böhm-Bawerk would agree with Ruskin in that 'money is now exactly what mountain promontories over public roads were in olden time. The fortified millionaire can make everybody who passes below pay toll to his millions, and build another tower of his money-castle. . . . The poor vagrants by the roadside suffer now quite as much from the bag-baron as ever they did from the crag-baron.' Dividend-receivers may, therefore, quite unconsciously, be grinders of the poor. It is a disadvantage of the present interest-system, from a moral point of view, that it allows some to live without working, and permits that condition to become hereditary. This is fraught with great possibilities of evil. Yet another disadvantage is that there is no ratio between gain and desert in the recipients of interest. Admitting all these, and other defects and abuses, Böhm-Bawerk says that it is they, rather than it, which should be abolished, and that, even if these evils are inseparable from interest, it is still most

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probable, considering all the benefits and advantages of interest, and the danger to any social system which endeavoured entirely to repress it, that its evils are more than counterbalanced by its good, and are less than those which its absence would bring upon us.

This theory is calculated to stay the disintegration which is going on in many sympathetic and earnest minds, under the continual drip of Socialistic attacks upon such a fundamental matter as the right to take interest.

But what of the attitude of the Bible and the pre-Reformation Church towards interest? To Socialist thinkers, that condemnatory attitude is, of course, the right one for all time, and with them the present attitude of Christians towards interest is regarded as a proof of decadence and surrender of principle, of disloyalty to the Scriptures and Christ, of a desire to serve both God and mammon, and of the truth of their favourite notion, that the Church has become the mere courtesan of Capital, the scarlet woman of the modern Babylon. If modern Christians wish to add another link of sympathy between themselves and Socialists, they have nothing to do but to repudiate in this matter the Church of the past three hundred years, to hark back to the Church mediaeval and patristic, and to contend for the literal application of Bible precepts to modern society.

On the other hand, if interest be economically inevitable—if it be just, reasonable, and right—the historical Christian student need be under no difficulty as to the hostility of the Bible and the ancient Church towards interest. Mr. Lecky, with evident prejudice against the Church, exults in the rise of interest despite its decrees, and regards this, not as a proof of the victory of Capital

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over the Church, as the Socialists do, but as the victory of civilization over Christianity, of rationalism over authority. But neither Mr. Lecky nor the Socialists are right. The Church and Bible protests against interest were needful for the times in which they were made. They were times of primitive economic conditions and of undeveloped industrialism, times in which interest *could only be exacted from the needy and distressed*. The possibility of interest in the modern extent of the term had not yet arisen. Hence biblical prohibitions do not avail for wholly changed social and economic conditions ; otherwise, the whole Jewish polity would be a pattern for us. Nevertheless, those prohibitions and precepts are of permanent value, for they assert principles which, if observed, will safeguard both the individual and society against the abuses to which interest, however in itself right and necessary, is for ever liable.

IV  
THE  
CHRISTIANIZATION OF  
POLITICAL ECONOMY



## IV

# THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

The true political economy is the care and culture of men.

EMERSON.

THE revolt against political economy, as it left the hands of Smith, Ricardo, and Mill—for it advanced but little in those of Fawcett, Jevons, and Marshall—is one of the most remarkable facts in the social movement of the nineteenth century. That revolt stiffened and deepened with time. Prejudiced professors and shallow sciolists repeatedly and solemnly affirmed that time would teach wisdom; that ‘the rules of arithmetic’ could not be gainsaid, nor the laws of political economy relegated to the planet Saturn with impunity; that these ‘laws,’ which possessed the inevitability of the law of gravitation, would yet avenge themselves. Nevertheless, the revolt went on, and enough time has now expired for the day of vengeance to be at hand; yet there is no sign of its appearance. The fact is, *the revolt is founded on righteousness, and therefore must prevail.*

The orthodox economy—which, alas! still rules the business mind, although not, we hope, for long time

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now—was too abstract and absolute, too unhistorical and unethical, to be true. With its insufficient definition of wealth ; with its abstract ‘economic man’ ; with its sole motive of self-interest, and its object of mere profit or money-making ; with its doctrine of value, its law of supply and demand, and its iron law of wages—it was and is a science prematurely so called. As a matter of history, it has canonized, almost legalized, certainly given, a quasi-scientific sanction to some of the worst passions of men—to the unutterable woe and shame of the modern world.

One huge error of the reigning political economy is that it has taken one particular period of industry—the rise of the ‘new industry’—examined its methods and operations, generalized them into laws with great skill and acumen, and then issued them to an only too credulous business world—to a business world whose selfish interests they conserved—as the permanent unchangeable laws of human industry. Orthodox economy is very largely the result of the fallacy of broad generalizations based upon particular instances. Industrial systems are never in one stay, but vary with the social, political, intellectual, and moral conditions of humanity. No one period, therefore, can give the law for all periods. The human factor bulks so largely in political economy that it is evident that there can be no finality in the science, and that therefore it is simple folly to talk of the ‘unchangeable’ laws of political economy, especially when over-rigid adherence to that economy has involved, and is involving, society in the greatest social and moral evils.

The historical nature of political economy has been demonstrated by the great founders of Socialism, and



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this has been accepted as a working principle by the leading economists of Germany and Austria, of whom the late William Roscher was one of the earliest and ablest.

To Christian social reformers the head and front of political economy's offence is, the audacious way in which it has ignored the very first principles of Christianity. To this hour it is maintained in the schools and the public press that political economy and Christianity have nothing to do with each other, that the one is 'science,' and the other 'morals.' But the Christian economist maintains that political economy is not a science like astronomy—without any human factor save to allow for the human equation in its calculations. Astronomy is the science of the stars, geology that of the stones ; but political economy is that of human industry, in which, while it has its material factors—its goods and its money—the supreme factor is the human being, who is really its main object, and over whose life and happiness it has almost supreme control. Political economy is largely a science of human relations. No such science can help being moral ; it is *immoral* when it is otherwise. Political economy, then, is really a branch of ethics, as well as of the wider science of sociology, and can only be safely expounded as such. It must in future be approached from the side of the human factor in it, and not, as it hitherto has been, from the side of its material factor. It must be recognized that every one of its laws, logically pursued, conducts to some ethical principle.

At one time we heard nothing save that political economy formulated the unchangeable laws of industry ; but now, as a result of criticism, we are being told that it is the science, not of what men *ought to be* in their

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industrial relations, but of what they *are* ; that, whether they ought to be or not, they *are* animated in business by the motive of self-interest, and that political economy simply deals with facts. The reply to this is, that by making political economy a scientific and ordered statement of the selfishness, greed, and materialization of men, it really helps to perpetuate and give sanction to those vices, and, as history testifies, leads even Christian men to divorce Christian ethics from their own business lives upon the pleas of 'science' and 'necessity.' Political economy thus conceived really ministers to the degradation of men. It is not in the interests of society that the workings of even so-called 'enlightened' self-interest should be turned into a science. It is unsafe, for such a science either produces or buttresses up a most un-ideal system of human industry. No system of industry which proceeds upon the principle of unscrupulous competition, of treating human labour as a mere commodity, and human beings as mere 'pawns' in the game of making money, as mere means to a selfish end ; of taking advantage of one man's poverty and necessity, and of another man's ignorance ; which sanctions the law of might, and not of right, and the principle of the survival of the fittest for success in the scramble for material wealth—no such system, nor any 'science' constructed out of it or creative of it, can by any stretch of generosity be called Christian.

A Christian or moral economy is in process of evolution—any deviation from which will be stigmatized as unscientific and anti-social—in which love is the ruling motive of human industry, and not cold self-interest ; in which wealth is re-defined as well-being ; labour is re-dignified, and political economy re-stated in the

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interests, not of material 'wealth,' but of labour. In this new economy, demand will be Christianized, and so will supply ; whilst the true law of exchange will be Justice, and the true law of distribution, Love. In a word, the coming political economy will not be heathen, but Christian.



V  
THE LAW OF  
SUPPLY AND DEMAND



## V

### THE LAW OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The new conscience says simply that a man shall never be so much of a buyer or seller as to cease to be a brother, and that labour shall not be made a marketable thing.—HENRY D. LLOYD.

THE law of supply and demand is the blessed word 'Mesopotamia' of political economy. It is invoked most by those who understand it least. Social reformers—especially those of the persuasion cleric—are hectored continually in the name of this law, as if they were all born geese. It is the bogey used to frighten the naughty boys of Labour whenever they grow refractory, and is brought out with added horrors—new horns, teeth, and tail—on the occasion of every fresh industrial dispute. This law, they are told, is as inevitable as the law of gravitation, and it is futile for enthusiasts to think of evading its force :

The further off we go,  
The swing of justice deals the mightier blow.

One valiant defender of it declares that 'when the hurly-burly's done, and the battle's lost and won, the hiring of labour, like the exchange of commodities, will be set free to be regulated by the heaven-ordained law of supply and demand'—which heaven forfend ! The superstitious

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worshippers of this law, when confronted with higher social demands, assume an air of benevolence, and declare that they should very much like to see the 'living wage' granted, or the conditions of the workman improved, but—up go the whites of their eyes—they cannot ignore the 'rules of arithmetic.' And this sort of thing is done—excellently well done—by 'superior' persons, who know no more of what they are talking about than the man in the moon. They could not stand five minutes' examination in political economy, but re-echo their parrot-cry either to preserve the *status quo*, with which they have every reason to be contented, or definitely to protect their own vested interests. The invocation of the law of supply and demand is seldom performed in the interests of truth—it is usually a species of mental bullying.

Now, no man in his senses will deny that in the very last result demand and supply have necessary connexion with the exchange of commodities, and even with labour, in as far as it may be called a commodity. But the law in this sense is the barest abstraction, and to utter it is to utter the emptiest of truisms. It is not with the abstract law of supply and demand that social reformers quarrel; it is with its concrete historical forms, with the existing laws of supply and demand.

The great general abstract law of supply and demand is like the mystic Brahm of Hindu philosophy—the Great Unknown—of whom or which little can be affirmed, save that it exists. The particular concrete laws of supply and demand are like the subordinate Hindu deities, who represent the great Brahm, and depose or succeed each other in endless efforts to reconcile finite and infinite, or reach perfection. The



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laws of supply and demand in any given industrial age or generation are but feeble approximations to, or faint expressions of, this one great abstract necessary law.

Now, it is through failure to make this necessary distinction that social obstructionists so greatly err in their denunciations of social reformers. They attribute to secondary, imperfect, and temporary laws of supply and demand the attributes and excellences of the great primary and perfect law, and fulminate accordingly. It will clear the ground, then, at once to state that social reformers are not occupied with the great Brahm of supply and demand. They are in revolt against gods that are no gods, against the existing laws of demand and supply—they refuse to admit either their infallibility or eternity. To them they are mere stages on the journey towards the industrial ideal.

The law of supply and demand existing in any given age or country is merely a generalization of industrial customs in relation to exchange then or there prevalent. These customs, both in relation to demand and in relation to supply, may be ethically questionable or bad, and socially doubtful or injurious; but if they are the customs of existing industrial life they can be formulated into a law and made part of a science of local or temporary economics. The root-fallacy of the modern champions of 'supply and demand' is that they argue, as men are so prone to do, from the particular to the general, and attribute to their own defective laws the necessity and unchangeableness of the great Brahm itself.

Now, so far from being 'immutable,' these laws have never been in one stay at any period of industrial history. They have been subject to constant modifications and

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interferences. Trade unions, trusts, syndicates, intended to control supply or create demand, have always been a deliberate, and often successful, interference with these so-called 'unchangeable' laws. These laws have, moreover, been modified unconsciously by a thousand subtle and unseen motives and forces, such as self, conscience, circumstance, discoveries, inventions, and what not. To assert that this is still the operation of the law of supply and demand is to reduce the law to the mere truism above mentioned, to surrender all that is contended for, and to evacuate the law of all meaning.

That the law of supply and demand, as we know it, cannot be the ideal one is proved by the fact that the moment it is permitted to operate in the world of labour, it brings in its wake oppression, injustice, misery, and destitution. Applied to the world of man, it results in the immoral practices of robbing the poor because he is poor, of taking advantage of his necessities to obtain his services at less than their true value, of treating human beings as cotton and coals are treated—buying them, or, what is the same thing, their powers of labour, in the cheapest market, making them mere commodities, governed in the purchase by merely material considerations; in a word, of using brother men simply as means to selfish ends. A law of supply and demand which results in these malpractices is self-condemned, is unfit to govern any of the relations which exist between human beings.

Professor Marshall, humanest of orthodox political economists, states in the preface to *The Economics of Industry* that in the present science of political economy, industrial man 'is supposed to be consulting his own material advantage and that of his family to the com-

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parative neglect of the welfare of others. If every one always found his greatest happiness in trying to do that which was best for others, the world would have no theory of normal values as it is described in this volume. Some such communism as that which prevailed among the early Christians would be the basis of economic theory. But in this world as it is, the chief active principle in business is the desire of each man to promote the material interests of himself and his family.'

Nothing can be plainer than the admission here that the laws of supply and demand in vogue are the laws of an industrial system which has for its main motive self-interest. However, therefore, Christian men can affirm that these laws are necessary and eternal passes comprehension. They can understand neither Christianity nor the laws of a true political economy.

As Ruskin long since declared, competition is the law of death, and co-operation is the law of life. An industrial society based on selfishness is seeking its own ruin; it is problematical whether such a system is even good for production in the long run, but it is demonstrably bad for either the lower or higher life of humanity.

'So far as I know,' says Ruskin, 'there is not in history record of anything so disgraceful to the human intellect as the modern idea that the commercial text, "Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," represents, or under any available circumstances could represent, an available principle of national economy. It is the privilege of fishes, as it is of rats and wolves, to live by the law of supply and demand, but the distinction of humanity, to live by those of right.'

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Christianity declares that the law of the family is the law of all human life—the law of service, not selfishness. The principle of mere demand and supply, of the law of the strongest, of the survival of the fittest, would not work an hour in family life. But if Christ came to teach anything, and if reason and God's Word have any validity, then all we are brethren, the human race is God's family, and mutual service is the only true law of human or industrial society.

The present system, therefore, cannot be perfect and eternal, but must be desperately imperfect and decidedly temporary. Any laws which can be shown to be injurious or unjust in their operation are thereby shown to be man-made laws, and far from being 'heaven-ordained.' Ruskin rightly maintains that the working of the laws of supply and demand inevitably results in injustice, for if two men compete for work, they underbid each other, and the successful man is underpaid; if two masters compete for one man, they overbid each other, and the workman is overpaid. Only when supply and demand are absolutely equal can justice be done; but this, under the present anarchical conditions, seldom happens, practically never. The present law is simply that of the strongest, and has no reference whatever to justice. Under the present system justice is a mere by-product.

Mark the uncontrolled working of this law in the labour market. It results in the depression and enslavement of the labourer. He stands in the market-place, landless, toolless, moneyless, over against the possessor of all three. The article he has for sale is his labour-power. That precious 'commodity' is perishable and vital—he cannot wait. He has the option of either starving or submitting to the price offered, frequently

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insufficient for subsistence. Even if he belong to the class of skilled labourers, and is protected by unionism, he still has to risk his means of existence in any dispute, and is handicapped by the competition of a huge surplus army of labourers—the unemployed—which permanently depresses his value. Whilst the labourer fights for industrial justice with his life, the capitalist fights with his gold, and—the weakest goes to the wall. This is the operation of the present law of supply and demand. To such a law a Christian people cannot much longer submit.

Mr. L. T. Hobhouse, in his *Labour Movement*, while admitting, as every economist must, that demand ultimately governs supply, declares that under the present system it uses very indirect and rough means of so doing. He declares that competition, in adjusting supply to demand, creates a vast amount of economic friction, and that ‘men’s lives are the brake upon the wheel.’ This friction ‘does not last for a time and then cease, but is continually going on. It is the perennial sore in the body politic ; the source of haggard anxiety, beggary, and confusion. It all depends upon the non-adjustment of supply to demand.’

Nor is this all. ‘Supply will, indeed, slowly tend to adjust itself to demand ; but, to say nothing of bloodshed by the way, if the labourer’s remuneration is below the minimum necessary to a certain development in mind and body, the tendency of free competition will not be to raise him to a level with that minimum, but to depress him further below it. I conclude, then, that while it is of the last importance that the mass of workers should have a sufficiency for health of mind and body, there is no necessary tendency in the action of com-

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petition to assign them such a sufficiency ; and I appeal to common experience to decide whether it does assign a sufficiency to half the workmen of the United Kingdom to-day.' This is the weighty utterance of an Oxford economist with a reputation to lose, and is approved of in the preface by another man with a reputation to lose—the Right Hon. R. B. Haldane, M.P. Ruskin's memorable words are here to the point : ' In a community regulated only by the laws of supply and demand, but protected from open violence, the persons who become rich are, generally speaking, industrious, resolute, proud, covetous, prompt, methodical, sensible, unimaginative, insensitive, and ignorant. The persons who remain poor are, the entirely foolish, the entirely wise, the idle, the reckless, the humble, the thoughtful, the dull, the imaginative, the sensitive, the well-informed, the improvident, the irregularly and impulsively wicked, the clumsy knave, the open thief, and the entirely merciful, just, and godly person.' Surely a law which operates so unequally and so unethically is the last law to cry up as 'a law of nature.' If it be, there is grave reason for regarding God as indifferent to morality in the constitution of nature.

As Ruskin again puts it : ' This robbing of the poor because he is poor is the especially mercantile form of theft, consisting in taking advantage of a man's necessities in order to obtain his labour or property at a reduced price.' It is one of the most pitiful things in this world to hear men, blinded and misled by Mammon, extol a law so unrighteous in its workings. Carlyle's words are not yet out of date : ' The haggard despair of cotton-factory and coal-mining operatives, Chandos farm-labourers, in these days is painful to behold ; but not so

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painful hideous to the inner sense as the brutish profit-and-loss philosophy and life-theory which we hear jangled on all hands of us—in senate house, sporting club, leading articles, pulpits, and platforms.’ It is, indeed, high time that this talk about ‘the heaven-ordained laws’ of supply and demand should cease. In view of their devastating influences, the social conscience begins to cry out, ‘Who made thee to rule over us?’

So far from being ‘immutable,’ then, these laws have been constantly checked and changed. This we might expect, for it is the prerogative of man to modify and control even the laws of nature for his own pleasure and advantage. The mighty law of gravitation, even—so often used to point an economic moral and adorn an economic tale—is tamed and harnessed by man for the service of man, and only in an equally ultimate abstract sense with the great law of supply and demand is it ‘free,’ and man’s master. The mightiest forces and facts of nature bend to man’s will and command; and so must the laws of demand and supply. This must be so, even if we raise these temporary laws to the height of laws of nature, instead of regarding them, as we ought, as mere inductions and generalizations from a low industrial era, the faulty and defective workings of the great Brahm.

The object of social reformers, then, is to revolutionize the law of supply and demand as now known; to modify and improve demand, to modify and improve supply, and to modify and improve their expression; to affect for good the quality of production and of distribution, and to elevate the methods of exchange. When this is done, a new and a true law of demand and supply will reign over us. Supply and demand are manipulated now, but

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mainly from motives of self-interest and gain, with little respect to the character of either of them.

Demand—effective demand—upon the part of the poor is at present insufficient and unhealthy; and upon the part of the rich, excessive and wasteful. The expression of demand and the forthcoming of supply are both also largely at the mercy of speculators and the unscrupulous. When once we have a true and full instead of a false and defective demand; a true and full instead of a false and defective supply; and an adequate and equalized relation between demand and supply—industrial society will flourish under the régime of the real and beneficent law. Until this come to pass, no wise man will be content with any inadequate law of supply and demand. The righteous contention of the hour is that the laws of supply and demand must not be permitted to entirely regulate the industrial and commercial relations of human beings. The social movement of the day is for the vindication of the labourer's humanity, and his resolute removal from the category of things. The latter might be permitted under slavery, but cannot be tolerated under Christianity, and under the vaunted political and legal freedom of modern civilization. Laws which will do for goods will not serve for persons. Labour must not be treated as a mere commodity—a commodity in the sense in which coal, and cotton, and iron are commodities. It is sacrilege and moral insanity! It may be economically profitable to the individual, but morality, religion, and humanity alike declare that the wages of labour must not be fixed by competition, but, within certain limits, by the moral sense of the community. This is the law of conscience and of reason, and is, therefore, never likely to conflict



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with the true law of supply and demand, for all are from God. So long as reason and conscience conflict with any given law of supply and demand, we may know that we are not in the presence of the great Brahm, but only in the presence of an inferior deity whose corruptions demand his deposition, or who has become to the enlightened social conscience an utterly inadequate substitute.

Our very economists and statesmen are beginning to flout these 'infallible' and 'heaven-ordained' laws, and are preparing to 'relegate them to the planet Saturn.' An age of economic scepticism has come in, which betokens, not the overthrow of political economy, but its radical reform in the interests of the higher life of the individual and of society.

The fact is, that the old order changeth, giving place to new. One economic custom has corrupted the world. The elimination of the moral factor from economics has resulted—not intentionally, but really—in the depreciation of the quality of goods, in adulteration and scamped work, but, worse than all, in the 'sweating,' oppression, and economic robbery of human beings.

The ethical factor must be reinstated; where it has lain latent and unexpressed, it must be made patent and prominent. Would that the wise words of James Anthony Froude, spoken forty years since into the ears of an inattentive world, had but been heeded! The problem of this hour would have been much less complex and serious. Said he: 'Even the laws of political economy itself cease to guide us when they touch moral government. So long as labour is a chattel to be bought and sold, so long, like other commodities, it follows the condition of supply and demand. But if, for his misfortune,

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an employer considers that he stands in human relations towards his workmen ; if he believes, rightly or wrongly, that he is responsible for them ; that, in return for their labour, he is bound to see that their children are decently taught, and they and their families decently fed, and clothed, and lodged ; that he ought to care for them in sickness and old age, then political economy will no longer direct him, and the relations between himself and his dependents will have to be arranged on quite different principles.' In other words, the political economy of Froude's day conflicted with the impulses of humane employers ; it could not direct them. But the new political economy, ethicized economy, will abundantly direct all such into paths of perfect industrial justice, mercy, and peace, and therefore into paths of industrial prosperity. If it cannot, then this world indeed is out of joint, non-moral, or God-less, against which Schopenhauer and all the pessimists have not spoken one word too much.

VI  
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## VI

# INDUSTRIAL COMPETITION AND SCIENCE

In brief, all this Mammon-Gospel of Supply-and-Demand, of Competition, Laissez-faire, and Devil take the hindmost, begins to be one of the shabbiest Gospels ever preached ; or altogether, the shabbiest.—CARLYLE.

MODERN men grow sick of our competitive system of industry, many tire of its tyranny, and many revolt from its morals. Nevertheless, it has its supporters. These are the successful and the scientific—the men who have ‘survived’ in the industrial struggle, and the men who are dominated by a scientific theory.

The ‘survivors’ who now enjoy the spoils of ‘survival,’ and support the system because of their own past record and their present vested interests, do not give a reasoned defence of competition. The nearest approach they make is when, with lordly hand-sweep, they bid us *circumspice*—look around and see what great things competition hath done. It has built up England’s great commerce, created her mighty cities and her mighty merchants. But when the lean and hungry onlooker, who has not so ‘survived,’ asks what of the many poor, of the slums, the unemployed, the half-employed, and misemployed, of drink, lust, gambling, and the curses of

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civilization generally, the 'survivor' hands him over to his friend the scientist.

This man of rigour—the man 'who knows, you know'—at once proceeds to instruct him that competition is the law of progress; that progress proceeds by the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest; that this is a natural law, the operation of which has brought nature to her present perfection, and that the struggle against it on the part of the industrial (to use a convenient Americanism) is as wise as knocking his head against a stone wall. If he be wise, he will no longer perform this operation, but will, if he be not 'fit' to survive, submit to go under, proud in the consciousness that the individual is sacrificed for the good of the race.

So dogmatically has this law been laid down that even the friends of the industrial are cowed by the Darwinian, and proceed to torture themselves and others by endeavouring to show that industrial reform is compatible with the iron law of competition. Mr. Benjamin Kidd, in his brilliant book on *Social Evolution*, which in the main makes for righteousness, was a victim to the ultra-Darwinian. The best Mr. Kidd could see for society was that the masses would be slowly placed upon an equality with the classes in the race for life. The democratic movement would result in an equality of opportunity—all would start fair, and then the race would be to the swiftest or the strongest.

Even this would not be attained by reason—reason, so said Mr. Kidd, would move the classes to prevent even this equality of opportunity ever becoming a fact—but a blind moral and religious instinct would, despite reason, work successfully to this end. So that, according to

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Mr. Kidd, the success of the democratic movement will only bring on a more colossal competition, in which the fight will be fiercer than ever before, and the 'survivors' probably less numerous. For, given equality between combatants, the end must surely be mutual extermination, after the time-honoured example of the Kilkenny cats.

Henri Amiel said, thirty years ago, that Darwinism was aristocratic in its doctrine of the survival of the fittest, and the foe of the democratic movement. Certainly the 'survivors' and the ultra-Darwinians think so.

If this be the last word of science on the subject, then it certainly is so. But that will be so much the worse for 'science,' and not for democracy. The probabilities are vastly greater that democracy will prevail in this matter than that 'science' will. But before that is discussed it may be as well to ask, Has true science said its last word? Does it mean, does it *dare* affirm, that competition is, now and always, the only and the necessary law of progress in the worlds, both of nature and man?

Science has not by any means said its last word. In fact, its most recent word is a confirmation of the moral instinct of humanity, and of the teaching of the Christian religion, that competition is not the sole law of life and of progress. Mr. Kidd will have to admit that 'irrational' religious instinct is once more victorious over reason, and victorious over his own reason in particular, when he maintains that all that social evolution can do is to hand the units of society over, with an equality of opportunity, to the dragon of competition. These moral and religious 'instincts,' which reason only slowly confirms, are far from being irrational, as Mr. Kidd affirmed,

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though they may be supernatural : they are the higher and the divine reason which it is the glory of God to conceal, and of the kings of men to find out.

However, scientific men have for some time been slowly arriving at the conclusion that competition is not the sole law of progress, even in nature. Professor Patrick Geddes, biologist and sociologist, nearly twenty years ago, drew attention to the importance of the reproductive function as a leading factor in progress and evolution. To Professor Geddes, this function makes it impossible for scientists to say that competition is the only law of progress. His words are : '*With the evolution of sociality which arises from reproductive aggregation in so many species, we see this subordinating struggle and greatly facilitating not only the increase in numbers of the species, but their higher specialization as well. We escape from the conception that progress depends primarily upon internecine struggle for existence—i.e. the subordination of the species to the individual, instead of primarily upon the subordination of the individual to the maintenance of the species in sex, offspring, and society. Thus our ethical difficulty at length disappears, since the greater steps of advance in the organic world compel us to interpret the general scheme of evolution as a primarily materialized ethical process underlying all appearance of a gladiator's show.*'

The late Professor Huxley assured us that 'from the point of view of the naturalist, the world is on about the same level as a gladiator's show ; its governing principle is intellectual, not moral.' This is Mr. Kidd's position so far as its dualism is concerned—only with him the governing principle is moral, not intellectual—and these two are in irreconcilable antagonism. But a dualistic



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account of the world is an incredible and an impossible one, and, as we see from Professor Geddes, the scientists are moving away from Dr. Huxley's ultra-Darwinian dualistic and individualistic position.

In the autumn of 1893 Sir James Crichton Browne gave a remarkable address before the Sheffield School of Medicine, in which he corroborated Professor Geddes' view. Said Sir James: 'The moment we get beyond the solitary cell, a simple organism which merely feeds and grows and liberates superfluous parts of its substance to start new organisms like itself, mutual obligation, or what may be called a moral relation, is discernible. Antagonism is converted into co-operation, and conflict gives place to harmony. The higher we ascend in the scale of being the more far-reaching and complicated does co-operation become. Individualism is gradually subordinated to collectivism; the struggle for existence becomes mainly the concern of the organism as a whole, and is in a minor degree that of the unity of which it is composed.'

So, again, in that remarkable but little-known book, Mr. A. J. Bell's *Why does Man Exist?* we read that competition 'is not the everlasting and unchangeable condition of evolution. Even from the beginning there was certainly present at least one unselfish element—the unselfishness of parents in relation to their immature offspring.' From this basis Mr. Bell goes on to explain and justify, on scientific grounds, the rise and progress of altruism, and to predict its final supremacy in the kingdom of man. Such a thinker is hardly likely to admit that the largest sphere of human activity is necessarily given over to the play of selfishness. The late Professor Henry Drummond, in his *Ascent of Man*, popularized the

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foregoing scientific facts. He set forth, in picturesque and flamboyant style, the truth that 'the struggle for the life of others' is as essential a factor in evolution as 'the struggle for life'; he emphasized the fact that not only nutrition, but also reproduction, is a leading factor in evolution. Prince Kropotkin, still later, in his *Mutual Aid*, has produced scientific evidence from the higher mammals to prove that co-operation is a greater factor in progress than struggle.

The position, therefore, at which we arrive is, that it is not true, even in nature, that natural selection or indiscriminate competition is the law of progress. It cannot, therefore, be the true law of human progress. Even if it were the law of progress in nature, it would not follow that it was the law of human progress. The emergence of an intelligent and moral being like man must make a vast difference. Human intelligence has sufficed to lift man above competition in the animal world, and human intelligence and morality will suffice to lift him above hurtful competition in the human world. The evolution in nature has been from individuality to sociality, so also will evolution be in human society.

Competition, as the only law of industrial life, is doomed—it is contrary both to the analogy of nature and to the moral instincts of men. It is contrary also to the teaching of the Christian religion, which, so far from eliminating the weak or sending them to the wall, cherishes and preserves them—which, moreover, condemns selfishness, and demands that men love their neighbour as themselves. It is contrary, because Christianity proclaims the brotherhood of men, declaring that the law of the family racial, as well as of the family

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domestic, is unselfishness and co-operation, the competition of love and service.

The elimination of base and selfish competition will not make for the destruction or deterioration of the individual. This the present competition does, and its elimination from the social system will make for his protection and true development. The incentive to exertion, when the principles of the Cross of Christ really operate in the industrial sphere as a governing force, will be, not selfishness but love, and all that love involves; and this motive-power will produce at one and the same time a perfect individual and a perfect society.



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INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM



## VII

### THE MODERN INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM<sup>1</sup>

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor ; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised ; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.—  
LUKE iv. 18.

LABOUR SUNDAY is observed even more largely upon the Continent than in this country. On the first Sunday in May it is the growing custom of Labour organizations everywhere to hold Labour demonstrations. This movement is only part of the great ferment with which all England and all Europe are now alive. Literatures, legislatures, councils, and clubs are all full of the social question. The present labour movement is undeniably a movement of the majority of the English people, and of the poorer part of the population ; it is therefore especially incumbent upon the Christian Church to give heed to it.

If the Christian Church and the Christian pulpit are unconcerned and silent when the majority of Englishmen are palpitating with hopes and fears and aspirations, and especially when the poor are crying aloud for justice,

<sup>1</sup> Delivered on Labour Sunday, 1893, before the Fabian Socialists in John Street Wesleyan Chapel, Chester.

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they well deserve the fate which will probably overtake them. In the past the Church has been very prominent in all the social revolutions of England—the Lollard movement owed much to Wyclif and his poor priests, and the Stuart tyranny was struck down by the Puritans. The industrial revolution of the present age must not find the Christian Church apathetic. That Church has lost touch with the people in modern times through an apathy induced by false or defective conceptions of Christ's evangel.

With the life-deeds of Jesus Christ before her, the Church has no right to 'spiritualize' away His words about the rich and the poor. Christ paid the greatest attention to the bodily needs of men. He fed men, cured their ailments, and cast in His lot with the needy and forlorn. The history of the Christian Church testifies that from the beginning up to modern times it has been directly interested in the material well-being of the people. That interest must not now cease because modern society is engaged more in dealing with the causes of poverty than with its symptoms. It is frequently affirmed that this new movement of the working classes is simply one for material improvements; but if it were so, that would be no reason for the Christian Church holding aloof, especially when questions of justice are involved. But this is a quite inadequate account of that movement. The influence of environment upon character is proverbial—if the people have their physical needs supplied, if their surroundings and conditions of life and labour are humane and Christian, these will directly affect their moral and religious condition. Those whose condition is squalid and poverty-stricken, not only on account of their idleness and love



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of drink, but demonstrably from economic and social causes, whose circumstances are tempting and demoralizing to the last degree, will undoubtedly rise in the moral scale the moment their circumstances are improved. To this work the Christian Church, in common with all other agencies, should eagerly address herself. The task of modifying or reforming modern industry is of course a vast, complex, and delicate one, but inasmuch as moral forces will have just as much to do with its reform as economic and political, the Church must play her part.

Many earnest Christians are appalled at the nature of the task. They seem to think that any great change in our present social system is quite impossible. They talk as though it were in its nature unalterable and eternal, as if it always had been with us and always would be. A very brief study of English industrial history would soon reveal to such timid minds that the present industrial system is but a few centuries old; beginning in the sixteenth century, it rapidly completed itself in the eighteenth and nineteenth by the invention of machinery, the rise of the factory system, and the discovery and application of steam-power. This being so, a system which had a beginning may have an end. If it can be changed for the worst—and no one denies that—it can surely be changed also for the better. England was not always under the aegis of Capitalism and Competition, and things went very well then; some of the best work in every realm of life—of action, word, and thought—was done in her pre-competition and pre-industrial days. Let us not, therefore, be appalled at the prospect of altering a form of human society which is really of but a temporary nature. Brave men and true

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Christians must face this Goliath of Gath in the name of the Lord, must ask what there is in the modern industrial system to which Christians ought to object, and, when discovered, to object with no uncertain sound. The first ground of objection for Christians is surely to be found in this, that it is a too purely competitive system. Business is done frequently upon the principle of the survival of the fittest—to 'cut out' one's neighbour from his market and his livelihood. 'Competition' is the note of the system—competition between capitalist and capitalist, between manufacturer and manufacturer, between merchant and merchant, between employer and employer, between tradesman and tradesman, between employé and employé. With what result? With certainly the result of a vastly extended commerce and great wealth in a few hands and an undoubted rise in the standard of civilization for many of the workers of the land; but also with a steady and increasing depreciation of the qualities of goods, an extension of adulteration both of food products and materials, and, which is much more serious, a steady debauching of the conscience of the community and of the individual, with the almost necessary over-working and under-paying of labourers, and their oppression in a diversity of ways.

A system *based* upon competition cannot have the countenance of Christians as such. For Christianity is a doctrine of human brotherhood and helpfulness, and selfishness is its antipodes; therefore a system which unblushingly proceeds upon the principle of selfishness must be contrary, as a system, to the teaching of Christ.

It is affirmed that there is competition in nature; but that is different from a competition developed by human ingenuity, unscrupulous and destructive. As man has

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already protected himself from the competition of the animal world, so he must protect himself against that of a semi-Christian and defectively moralized human world. Some are contented with saying that competition is limited. It is ; but it is limited largely by force—the force of State control. It is true that motives of compassion and justice and brotherliness sometimes, in individual cases, modify it ; but these motives only render such individuals less fitted to survive in a competitive community—a fact which in itself is a great indictment of the system, at least in Christian eyes.

Two things are quite clear—that Christ claims to bring all life under His law, and that that law is love. Therefore, a system of society and of industry which compels men to treat each other as enemies and rivals, which makes the success of one involve often loss to another, which, therefore, makes brotherliness in business wellnigh impossible—a mere quixotic ideal—is demonstrably un-Christian. The only competition countenanced by Christianity is the competition how best to serve each other—a virtual, a disguised co-operation—a competition which means no loss to one's brother men, but a gain.

The first objection, therefore, to the present industrial system is that it is too exclusively competitive. The second objection is like unto it—indeed, is derived from it—viz. that it involves taking advantage of a poor man's necessities. Economists and practical business men say that the employment and remuneration of the labourer must be governed by the law of supply and demand, just as are the supply and price of any other commodity. Therefore, when a crowd of workmen or clerks present themselves for employment, it is good 'business' to take advantage of this glutted labour market, and pay

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those employed the lowest wage they will accept. These poor wretches, competing against each other for work, accept a wage far less than the value of their services—far less, often, than suffices to keep them and their families in civilized, or even human, comfort. From this application of the law of supply and demand to human labour comes a deliberate taking advantage of a poor man's necessities, comes the 'sweating' system and all its horrors, comes also the vast quantity of underpaid labour. Well might the Bible tell us that 'the destruction of the poor man is his poverty.' Christians must heed, not political economy, but the Christian conscience and the Word of God, which say, 'Rob not the poor because he is poor.'

So, again, in modern strikes. In these the workman fights with his life and with the lives of his wife and children; the masters, however much they stand to lose, do not stake the very bread of their children; and yet the settlement of such disputes often directly hinges upon the length of time it will take to bring men, who see their wives and children blanch and pine, to their knees. Truly here again our industrial system commits the sin of taking advantage of a poor man's necessities, a sin against which the prophets of Israel fulminated, but which 'Christian' men of business defend as 'economic necessity.'

The very Government of England, under political pressure, is beginning to eschew a principle acted upon by nearly nine out of ten Christian business men. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman,<sup>1</sup> speaking in his place as a member of the Government in 1895, said, concerning the wages

<sup>1</sup> Now the Rt. Hon. H. Campbell-Bannerman, Prime Minister of England (1907).

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of dockyard labourers, that 'not a very long time ago it would have been regarded as a sufficient answer by the House if he had said, "We get men enough for the wages we offer." That *was* a fact to be kept in mind, but it was no longer a complete answer. We have ceased to believe in competition wages or starvation wages.' The reason assigned was an ostentatiously prudential and selfish one—not that it was wrong, inhuman, un-Christian, immoral, but that it meant 'starvation *work*.' So that, even in this forward step, our industrial instincts are still so defective morally as to defend a right action upon wrong grounds—upon the ground of mere selfish convenience, and not upon the true ground of the rights of the workman.

The unjust distribution of the wealth of this country is a proof that advantage is taken of the necessities of the poor. The national income of this country is about £1,350,000,000 ; 11,000,000 of the population, or less than one-third, obtain £850,000,000 of this sum.<sup>1</sup> They constitute the propertied and trading classes, and include landowners, rent-receivers, interest-receivers, merchants, manufacturers, tradesmen, and professional workers. The remaining 26,000,000, or more than two-thirds of the population, only receive £500,000,000. That is, one-third of the population obtains two-thirds of the national wealth ; and two-thirds of the nation, embracing the great majority of the workers of the nation, receive but one-third. This cannot be a just division, and is a direct outcome of morally defective methods of industry

<sup>1</sup> It is more unjust now. The income is more than £1,710,000,000, and £830,000,000 of it is received by 5,000,000 out of 43,000,000 of the population. See *Riches and Poverty*, by L. G. Chiozza Money, M.P.

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and business. The result of taking advantage of the necessities of the poor is that the average income of the fortunate 11,000,000 of the population is £305 per adult man, whilst that of the unfortunate 26,000,000 is but £77 per adult man. Out of every shilling earned in England, fourpence goes to landlord and capitalist as rent and interest, and the eightpence left is shared between the manager and the wage-earner. The educated workers number one-fifth of the total number of workers, yet they obtain fourpence of this eightpence, leaving to the uneducated workers, four-fifths of the whole body of workers, the remaining fourpence. Here, again, 'the destruction of the poor is his poverty.' The consequences of this unequal division of the national wealth are that four out of every five workers only receive an annual average wage of £35 per adult man, that one-third of the wage-earners are either destitute or in receipt of poor relief, that over 40 per cent. are permanent paupers, and that one in every five dies a pauper's death in workhouse or hospital. Mr. Charles Booth declares that the great mass of old-age pauperism is due to *undeserved* poverty; to declining wage-earning power and inability to save out of a subsistence wage. Hence, things are come to the pass that one in every four of the community above sixty years of age is a pauper, three out of every five above seventy, and actually nine out of every ten above eighty. These are simply scandalous figures, and a lurid indictment of our present industrial system. Mr.<sup>1</sup> Charles Booth tells us that in London there are, out of five millions of people, no less a number than 1,292,737 below or on the line of poverty. Thirty per cent. of the population of London

<sup>1</sup> Now the *Rt. Hon.*

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do not earn more than a guinea per week per family.<sup>1</sup> And all this whilst human life is lengthened by sanitation, men's wants are increased by education, and political power is put into their hands.

Mr. Frederic Harrison says: 'To me, at least, it would be enough to condemn modern society as hardly an advance upon slavery or serfdom, if the permanent condition of industry were to be that which we now behold—that 90 per cent. of the actual producers of wealth have no home that they can call their own beyond the end of the week; have no bit of soil or so much as a room that belongs to them; have nothing of value of any kind except as much old furniture as will go on a cart; have the precarious chance of weekly wages which barely suffice to keep them in health; are housed for the most part in places that no man thinks fit for his horse; are separated by so narrow a margin of destitution that a month of bad trade, sickness, or unexpected loss brings them face to face with hunger and pauperism. This is the normal state of the average workman in town or country.' These words were spoken at the Industrial Remuneration Conference in 1886, by a leading Englishman, by one who has been foremost in social questions for fifty years. John Stuart Mill himself admitted this unjust distribution of English wealth. In his *Principles of Political Economy* he says: 'The deepest root of the evils and iniquities which fill the industrial world is not competition, but the subjection of Labour to Capital, and the enormous share which the possessors of the instruments of production are able to take from the produce.'

Beside the social injustice perpetrated by this in-

<sup>1</sup> See also *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (York). B. S. Rowntree. (Macmillan).

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equality of wealth-division, we have the creation of a class able to live in idleness and luxury. Now, it is laid distinctly down in the New Testament that if, in a Christian society, a man will not work, neither shall he eat. Therefore a system which produces a class of idlers, of consumers who are not all producers or necessary to production, who do nothing for their living, is a system self-condemned, however it may legalize the status of such social parasites. Such men have no moral right to eat. How dissolute such a class tends to become our divorce and criminal courts, and the life of so-called 'society,' only too frequently reveal. Economists unite with moralists in deprecating the existence of such a class, although the teachings of orthodox political economy largely tend to foster it. J. S. Mill deplors 'the great social evil of a non-labouring class,' and the late Professor Cairnes writes that 'it is important on moral no less than on economic grounds to insist upon this, that no public benefit of any kind arises from the existence of an idle rich class.' Jesus Christ and the New Testament writers speak plainly enough about the evil of riches, and it would have been well if Christendom had heeded this teaching. A system which compels the many to die undeveloped that the few may live mis-developed cannot be Christian, because it is neither just nor brotherly.<sup>1</sup> Kant, even in the name of philosophy, affirms that it is wrong to use man as a mere means to one's own end. Much more must this be affirmed in the name of Christianity. Yet this thing everywhere is done almost without protest. Men use their brother men as so many 'hands,' as so much of the stuff called 'labour,' as mere self-acting, wealth-producing machines. It matters

<sup>1</sup> See No. 5, *John Street*, R. G. Whiteing. (Nelson).



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not what are the conditions of their labour—witness white-lead workers or nail-makers, and the contrast between the hours of labour and the general treatment of the old bus and tram men compared with that of bus and tram horses. It matters little to many employers what are the social and moral and intellectual condition of their employés; it is not ‘business’ to consider such things. As Carlyle said, fifty years ago, the only connexion between the master and his men, in a multitude of cases where the present system is logical and thorough, is a cash-nexus. There is no human relationship in the whole sordid business, with the result that the capitalist and employing class have reaped that which they have sown—a ripe harvest of indifference to their interests, or else of contempt and hatred for themselves. Social reformers cannot ‘set class against class’—they are already dead-set against each other.

It is high time, then, that Christian teachers proclaimed that Christian business men, at least, are expected to respect the dignity of human nature in the humblest of their servants, to remember that Christ died for the day-labourer as well as for his master, and that if they be Christians, even rough, unskilled labourers are temples of the Holy Ghost and kings and priests unto God, most precious in His sight. Capitalists must not try to make God’s children provide bricks without straw, for if they do there is for them a fearful looking for of fiery indignation and wrath. God is not dead, and He will hear the cry of the oppressed. That such words are not unnecessary any man who knows life and who moves amongst men can testify. An iron-master recently said to a social reformer, ‘If you employed men on a large scale, you would soon find that you ceased to look

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upon men as men. They become simply so much producing power.' This is truth, but execrable truth, a revelation of the nature of our present system. Of course many large employers do not yield to this temptation. But, as that social reformer said to the iron-master, 'If the captains of industry can reduce ore to iron only on the terms of reducing men to units of power, the sooner the captains of industry are discharged, and their places filled by the brothers of industry, the better.'

Labour must cease to be a mere commodity; such a doctrine gives man a property in man, and brings slavery in again by a back-door. The degradation of the labourer, his vulgarity and vice, are partly to be laid to the account of society. Much is said about his follies and sins, but little about the industrial system which helps to produce him. As Ruskin says in *Unto this Last*, 'If you examine into the history of rogues, you will find that they are as truly manufactured articles as anything else, and it is just because our system of political economy gives so large a stimulus to that manufacture that you may know it to be a false one.'<sup>1</sup>

There is, therefore, the greatest possible reason for Christian thinkers to be dissatisfied with the prevailing system of industry. It is based upon the principle of competition, takes advantage of the poor man's necessities, distributes its wealth with cruel inequality, creating the very rich at one end of the social scale and the very poor at the other; it proceeds upon the principle of making men a mere means to personal advantage, and thus results in all kinds of inhumanities. The present industrial system sets up a false and anti-Christian ideal

<sup>1</sup> II. 48, footnote.

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of life. 'Business' is the supreme thing, and comes practically before every other interest. The material side of life is foremost ; we have become what we were not always—a nation of shop-keepers, manufacturers, traders, and financiers. The true order of things has been reversed by the 'New Industry' ; material progress, which ought to be ranked lowest, is now ranked highest ; the mill, the bank, the factory, the store, are now the centre of town and city life ; the school, the library, the church, are mere accessories, things to amuse or discipline the human ant, mole, or drudge.

An Englishman who had been long abroad in America, acting as a pioneer in coal-mining, and had become Americanized, recently remarked to a Christian minister : ' We always build a church as soon's we can in Amer'ca. First we sink the shaft, then we build huts, and then the church. You see, stranger, it sort o' settles the work-people, 'specially the women—seems kind o' home-like. I allus says to my d'rectors, "Gentl'men, let's build a church as soon's we can ; it's a payin' thing—a good inves'men'." Yes, 'tis, stranger, a v'ry good inves'men', 'nd I allus do 't.' This man evidently thought himself quite religious, and was unable to see the nature of his attitude. This is a sample of the tendencies of an industrial system which subordinates everything to money-making, prostituting even religion to its service. In pre-industrial days the towns clustered round the church or cathedral ; now they are mere adjuncts to the factory or pit, or, at best, the town hall. The vanished architectural supremacy of the Church is a sign of the renunciation of her code of morals and her control in the market-place.

The theories of political economy which have domin-

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ated, and still, to a large extent, dominate modern industry, have been partly the reflection and partly the secret of this gross materialism and selfishness. They need the great revision which they are now most unwillingly undergoing. They have circulated a limited and therefore injurious definition of wealth, of work, of the motives to both, and of the objects and ends of both. Christians must unite in spreading nobler conceptions of wealth and work, and in improving the conditions of both. Mr. Ruskin's words are here strictly apposite : 'There is no wealth but life—life, including all its powers of love, of joy, of admiration. That country is richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others. A strange political economy! the only one, nevertheless, that ever was or ever can be, all political economy founded on self-interest being but the fulfilment of that which once brought schism into the policy of angels and ruined the economy of heaven.'<sup>1</sup>

Some Christians may turn from these statements, muttering 'Socialism.' If they be, then Socialism is Christianity. But they are not Socialism. Socialism is a definite economic theory which attempts to show a way out of the present evil pass. As the only coherent and complete theory in the field, even Socialism is worthy of the serious consideration of Christian people. It is astonishing what a bugbear a name becomes; to utter 'Socialism' to most modern Christians is like crying 'Mad dog!' to a crowd—panic seizes all. That panic is nearly

<sup>1</sup> *Unto This Last*, iv. 156-7.

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always due to ignorance or misconception. But the points which have been adduced are points which prove that, quite apart from 'Socialism,' industry is working on heathen and non-Christian lines. Many Christians seem to have forgotten what Christianity is, and what it demands from both Christian individuals and Christian society. As Canon Gore<sup>1</sup> says: 'It is difficult to imagine that a New Testament Christian could have doubted that he had to carry his religion into all the affairs of life, or could have been in the least surprised if his religion involved his being poorer than one of his non-Christian neighbours, who was not bound by the obligations of the Church. How, then, is it that we have reached a condition of things when men can not only utter, as multitudes of men always have done, the maxims of worldliness and selfishness, but utter these maxims without any sense that simply by giving expression to them they are repudiating Christianity, as far as words go, as really as if they were denying the Christian creed?'

In an address delivered as president of an Ethical Society, Dr. Edward Caird, the present Master of Balliol College, Oxford, said: 'There is nothing in this "new Christianity" which is other than a re-statement in modernized terms of the old Christianity. It is the problem "how to raise the estate of man, and to raise it organically"; that is, not, as in ancient Greece, to elevate a few at the expense of the rest, but to raise men as a social body, in which none can be left behind without injury to all the others. And under this conception the greatest effort, of course, must be directed to the class that is most numerous and most poor, as the class that is in most danger of being left behind.'

<sup>1</sup> Now the Bishop of Birmingham.

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This is an accurate description of modern social Christianity. One comfort remains : If the priest and Levite of the Christian temple, the minister and official layman of the Christian Church, pass by Labour, lying on the roadside wounded, robbed, and half dead, the good Samaritan apart from the Church will care for, uplift, and cherish him. It will be to the everlasting shame and ignominy of the Church if in the present emergency her representatives pass by on the other side ; but Labour will not perish, for the Heavenly Father has sent His Son, the Good Samaritan, to care for him and to vindicate his cause. Better things, however, will surely be forthcoming from the Christian Church than such inconsistency and cowardice.

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## VIII

### THE LIVING WAGE

If every just man that now pines with want  
Had but a moderate and beseeching share  
Of that which lewdly pampered luxury  
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,  
Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed  
In unsuperfluous, even proportion,  
And she nowith encumbered with her store ;  
And then the Giver would be better thanked,  
His praise due paid.—MILTON'S *Comus*.

'THE living wage' is a subject of the deepest interest both to those who pay and to those who receive wages. The late Pope, Leo XIII, who, to the great annoyance of many, declared in favour of a 'living wage,' meant, by the phrase, that wage which will suffice to keep a man and his family in decent and frugal comfort. If His Holiness could have secured such a wage for the poor Italian peasant, who, overworked, underpaid, and overtaxed, starved near the Vatican, he would have secured the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen. To the half-starved Italian the English artisan would seem a millionaire. The late Alderman Fleming Williams once defined the living wage to be that wage 'which will suffice to maintain the average workman with the average family in an average

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degree of comfort.' This definition is ingenious enough, but it is useless for practical purposes ; this application of the law of averages only results in giving us an abstract workman—a mere idea—whereas society has to deal with the real workman. The whole difficulty of the living-wage question lies in the concrete. In this connexion comes in the consideration that the wants of no two workmen are alike, and the consequent impossibility of any general law meeting the wants of both. The very physical wants of workmen differ—those of a navvy, for instance, being much greater than those of a machine-minder. To meet this difficulty, it has been proposed to amend the definition of the living wage, and say that it is the wage which will suffice to maintain the workman and his family in the state of material comfort and social amenity common to the best of his class. This view is defended by saying that it would obviate the necessity of paying every man alike—a manifest injustice ; it would secure to a man a wage sufficient to provide him with the comforts and refinements of his own class. It is said that the best men in any given class exhaust the economic possibilities of that class, and that if men refused to qualify for their wage they should sink to some lower grade of labour. It is also held that it should be open to employers to pay more, but not to pay less, their privilege being, as Ruskin told them long ago, to refuse to employ the workman who was not worth this ' living ' or ' class ' wage. But this opens up many difficulties. Another definition of the living wage is, that it must be sufficient to maintain the workman and his family in a condition of civilized and Christian comfort. The object of this definition is to distinguish between a mere subsistence wage and a civilized wage. Some are not content with

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securing a subsistence wage for the lower grades of labour, but are anxious to secure a 'civilization' wage for all workers. Hence this last definition. From these various definitions it may be seen what those who demand the living wage are aiming at.

The grounds upon which the living, or civilized, wage is advocated are various. It is, first of all, maintained that the living wage is the demand of nature. The claims of nature are for a subsistence wage, and if less is paid or is forthcoming nature ordains that the individual shall die. Moreover, nature (or God) provides man with the power, when he comes to maturity, to provide himself and others with sustenance. Every man comes into the world with one mouth and two hands, a sign that he is able to earn more than enough for his own personal wants. Nature unmarred also affords opportunity for this. Given free access to the land, every healthy human being could easily obtain enough to keep both himself and others. The fundamental necessities of man are food, shelter, clothing, and fuel. Thoreau tried the experiment of earning these direct from nature. 'For more than five years I maintained myself solely by the labour of my hands, and I found that, by working six weeks in a year, I could meet all the expenses of living. The whole of my winters, as well as most of my summers, I had free and clear for study.'<sup>1</sup> For two years and two months of that time Thoreau lived in the *primaeval* forest alone, near Walden Pond. He says that the only thing for which he was indebted to civilization was an axe, which he borrowed, but which he returned sharper than when lent. He is convinced, both by reason and experience,

<sup>1</sup> *Walden*. (Walter Scott & Co),

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that to maintain one's self on this earth is not a hardship, but a pastime, if we will but live simply and wisely. 'It is not necessary that a man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow, unless he sweats easier than I do.' Certainly, if a delicate man like Thoreau, an educated man and a writer, can thus not wring, but win from nature a year's living in six weeks, it does seem possible for an average mortal, healthy and strong, to amply provide for himself and the 'average' family well within the year.

The advocates of the living wage contend then, to start with, that nature ordains a minimum wage for men, without which they perish. This is her cost of living; with less than this she will not permit life to continue. She also makes provision for men to obtain this necessary minimum—this subsistence wage; if they will work, they may be sure of eating. This being so—famines, pestilences, floods, barrenness, being exceptions to prove the rule—civilized society interferes with nature, or the purpose of God, when it fails both to ordain at least a living wage, and to secure it to the honest toiler. Further, if society raises the standard of living, makes it practically compulsory for men to live in the enjoyment of a certain minimum of civilized comfort and decency, it has not finished its task unless it sees to it that men are able to live up to this standard. Nature only asks men to live, and she supports life. Society expects—nay, necessitates—civilized life. It should therefore make civilized life possible. If Society takes the place of nature in one thing (creating a certain standard of living), it must take it in all, and therefore guarantee to men the possibility of earning at least a 'civilized' wage. In addition to this, it is urged that art, after all, is but nature, and therefore society, which has sought out

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many other inventions, is inevitably driven by a natural impulse to complete its task, and secure to its citizens means whereby to live the civilized life.

When, however, we find that civilization takes the place of nature, and yet renders it impossible for men to obtain a living—a civilized living—then civilization becomes a curse instead of a blessing.<sup>1</sup> There must be a return to nature, either by the way of reform or of revolution, the former, of course, being most desirable. Those who call for a living wage make their demand, not only in the name of nature, but also of justice. They maintain that the demands of civilization make it possible, given right legislation, and still more, and antecedently, right moralization, to give to every honest producer of useful articles a living wage. They hold that the workman—the skilled or unskilled workman—has the right to a fair share of the product, and that that share cannot, in any articles of real service to the community, be less than a living wage. Judging by the profits of industry, by the wealth of this country, and by the unequal distribution of that wealth, they are prepared to maintain that the workman's wage should be more than a literally 'living' wage; it should be a civilized wage. They demand this, without holding the Socialist heresy that labour is the sole creator of national wealth. Their case seems to them established by the foregoing considerations, and in no need of the sweeping and questionable doctrine with which the Socialists burden their cause. They also point out that modern society, by every step it takes in increasing the wants of the working classes, makes it more and more impossible that they should be in any uncertainty as to at least a decent

<sup>1</sup> See *Cause and Cure of Civilization*, E. Carpenter. (Sonnenschein.)

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maintenance, whatever be the nature of their work ; and this, not at all as a matter of charity, but as a matter of justice and of necessity. The final step in the emancipation of the worker will begin to take place so soon as he is assured, either by common consent and practice or by legal enactment, that his daily work brings him, in return, a civilized wage.

The words of the judicious Hooker upon this subject will be of weight to most educated, and to all Christian, Englishmen. In his *Ecclesiastical Polity* (Book I., chap. x., sec. 2) occurs the following passage : ‘ All men desire to lead in this world a happy life. That life is led most happily wherein all virtue is exercised without impediment or let. The apostle, in exhorting men to contentment, although they have in this world no more than very bare food and raiment, giveth us thereby to understand that those are even the lowest of things necessary. That if we should be stripped of all those things without which we might possibly be, yet these must be left ; that destitution in these is such an impediment as, till it be removed, suffereth not the mind of man to admit any other care. For this cause, first God assigned Adam maintenance of life, and then appointed him a law to observe. For this cause, after men began to grow to a number, the first thing we read they gave themselves unto was the tilling of the earth and the feeding of cattle. Having by this means whereon to live, the principal actions of their life afterward are noted by their exercise of religion. True it is, that the kingdom of God must be the first thing in our purposes and desires. But inasmuch as righteous life presupposeth life ; inasmuch as to live virtuously it is impossible except we live ; therefore the first impedi-

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ment, which naturally we endeavour to remove, is penury and want of things without which we cannot live. Unto this life many implements are necessary; more, if we seek (as all men naturally do) such life as hath in it joy, comfort, delight, and pleasure.' This deliverance of Hooker's bears vitally upon the living-wage question, and lifts up the discussion to a still higher level.

The advocates of the living wage claim that revealed religion is in favour of it as well as natural religion. They appeal not only to nature and reason, but also to 'the law and the testimony.' Agur's words (Proverbs xxx. 8), 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain,' are taken to sanction the living wage. A moderate competency is here set forth as the desirable ideal of material life, either extreme not being in the interests of morality and religion. The community, therefore, which makes this possible for all men is in harmony with the teachings of Holy Writ. The same teaching is said to appear in the Lord's Prayer, in the petition, 'Give us day by day bread for the coming day,' a petition which, whatever wider reference it may have, is one for a living wage. Our Lord here teaches us to look up to our Heavenly Father for at least that, and therefore any society which is in accordance with the will of God will secure that to all honest, useful workers. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount our Lord may be said to teach men to trust God for at least a living wage. 'Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things'; and again, 'All these things shall be added unto you.' Christ certainly did not contemplate a form of human society in which, let a

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man trust God never so much, he is, on account of 'economic' difficulties, the result of human error and selfishness, in imminent danger of starving, despite his willingness to work. The context of these sayings reveals that a society which seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness will secure for its members a living wage. The words are addressed to the disciples as a body, and teach that a christianized society will be a society in which no good man needs to worry about securing his daily bread. It will be accessible to him who works.

Much is made of the doctrine of Christian contentment by those who do not personally feel the pressure of this question, and who dislike social agitation. Such passages as St. Paul's, 'Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content,' are continually quoted. But the advocates of the living wage have no difficulty in pointing out that even this passage presupposes, as, indeed, Hooker declares in the above quotation, that we are not to be content when we have not food and raiment. There is nothing in it to make either Christian individuals, Christian churches, or Christian communities contented when workers have not the necessities of existence, but, on the contrary, discontented. The exhortation of John Baptist to the soldiers, 'Be content with your wages,' is often quoted against the present discontent, but it is not valid. The Roman soldier had secured to him by law a living wage—his denarius, or a penny a day. This was sure, and this was sufficient. He had no rent to pay, no clothes to buy, no food even to purchase, and had, withal, his denarius, his penny a day, besides, doubtless, in those rude days plenty of perquisites. This exhortation is therefore addressed to men who had guaranteed to them a civilized wage—



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something more even than a living wage. The inference surely is that such a wage should be guaranteed to modern men, and that they do right to be discontented until it is somehow secured to them. St. Paul's before-cited famous declaration that, 'If any will not work, neither shall he eat,' has some bearing also upon the living-wage question. In the light of this passage, no man, in a christianized society, who does not in some true sense work has a moral right to eat ; but it is a necessary corollary, further, that in such a society every man who does work has a moral right to eat, and has a just grievance against society if he be prevented, by so-called 'economic' causes, from eating. It is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles that when the Church was founded on the Day of Pentecost the first Christian society found it impossible to submit to any great material inequalities, but those who were well-to-do 'sold their possessions and goods, and parted to all men as every man had need'; that is, secured, first of all, not equality, but a living wage for every man, 'as every man had need.' The experiment failed because of the covetous, lying, and hypocritical ; but it was a true ideal, and a more highly moralized and christianized human society is beginning to turn again towards it. Every man must be guaranteed his living wage. If it can be secured out of surplus wealth in these richer times, there will be no need for a voluntary surrender of means. If it cannot, then such voluntary surrender amongst Christians is again, sooner or later, inevitable, unless, which is much to be deprecated, it be preceded by compulsory surrender.

The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard may be cited as sanctioning the principle of a minimum wage.

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The householder engages his first-hired men evidently upon business principles, but agrees to pay even them the living wage of the time—a penny a day, a denarius. Major F. R. Conder, of the Palestine Exploration Society, tells us that the Roman denarius was the equivalent of the Hebrew zuza, or quarter-shekel. 'The hire of a labourer or a workman, about the time of the Christian era in Palestine, was equivalent to the price of a quarter of a bushel of wheat. If we take 56s. a quarter as an average wheat-price, we have a day's wage of 1s. 9d., which is rather higher than the ordinary rate in Wales. It is as high as the rate still prevailing for the agricultural labourer in some country districts at the present day.' In some further calculations Major Conder shows that the Jewish oral law enacted 'that 7s. per week was the lowest rate at which life was to be supported,' and that in a land where, on account of the climate, food, fuel, clothing, and shelter are all so much less expensive.' He goes on to remark that 'the law of Moses not only was designed to secure, but absolutely did ensure, to the entire nation of Israel a degree of material comfort and frugal wealth, to which, as regarding the case of the poorest of the population, rather than the extreme wealth of the richest or the ordinary average income of the masses of society, the world, in the course of history, can afford no parallel.' This digression, interesting in itself, is made to prove that the householder in the parable began by paying a living wage. At the end of the day he insists upon paying men who worked but one hour at the same rate. Of course this was more than justice—it was generosity. But it is significant of the habits of Jewish society, which evidently still lived industrially by the traditions of a time

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when God only was their King. This householder cannot find it in his heart to pay any man who has been all the day 'idle' (that is, without work through no fault of his own) anything less than a living wage. That this is in harmony with the traditions of his nation may be gathered from the fact recorded by Josephus, that the labourers in the repairs of the Temple received a day's pay even if they only wrought for a single hour. The householder in the parable pays his wages upon moral principles—'whatever is right.' Now, it is just here that modern methods of wage-paying are defective. They are defective upon the moral side. Wages are determined by purely economic considerations. They are fixed by competition, and are regulated by simple reference to the law of supply and demand. If the householder in the parable had gone forth and said to the men standing idle in the market-place, 'Men, there is but an hour left in which to work. I will give you a farthing to work in my vineyard,' that would now be considered very good business. But it was not then, and it will not be somewhen.

A workman's wages are now determined, as has been well said, 'not by his own life necessities, but by his employer's business necessities'—without reference, that is, to his deserts or to his needs. That ultimately there must be some reference to his needs was dimly felt by economists when they formulated the 'iron law of wages,' viz. that wages tend always to drop to the level of subsistence, of which Lassalle made such unexpected use. Even they never imagined that wages would tend to fall below it! But political economy improved upon that by the law of supply and demand, so that when supply permits of it (and human labour is now nearly

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always a drug in the market) wages much below subsistence level can be paid, and so cheap production can be attained by a much reduced labour bill. Human lives will be lost in the process, but more are to be had for the asking, and 'political economy has nothing to do with morals.' But society has, and God Almighty has ! When the conscience of the one and the wrath of the Other begin to awaken, some economists then begin to discover that 'starvation wages mean starvation work,' and business men begin sullenly to change their practices. The business men are right ; starvation wages do not always mean starvation work. Some kinds of work can be as well done by half-starved men, or men in the early processes of starvation, as by well-fed men, and those business men whose only consideration is profit resent being prevented by public opinion from using such labour. As Mr. Kidd some tried to teach, there are occasions when cold economic and rational considerations are in direct opposition to moral and religious considerations. The living-wage agitation is one of them, and the contention of Christian and ethical thinkers is that here, too, must the economic be subordinated to the moral and humane. No longer must business men disregard the needs and the deserts of men, and settle their wages by simply considering the limits of possibility—how little it is possible to give. These methods are immoral, and work woe to the community, if weal to material production.

The advocates of the living wage contend that wages should be a first charge upon production. In a truly christianized community, wages will be considered before profits. Prices at present are regulated by competition, and wages by prices ; in a word, prices govern wages.

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The new demand—and yet a very old one—is that wages should, to some very real extent, govern prices. The public should be given to understand that, where human labour is concerned, there is a limit to the reduction of prices. That limit is not simply the ability to produce goods at a profit, although that will be involved, but the payment of a living wage to the workers concerned. The objections to all this are, of course, numerous, and some of them are worth notice. Others—those which evidently come from threatened vested interests—can be well disregarded.

It is objected to this, that it is all economically impossible. But that is mere assertion, and must be, from the nature of the case. It is based upon the assumption that political economy is a fixed science, whereas it is not. As a matter of fact, we do not know what is economically possible until we have experimented. True, we must be very cautious in our experiments, for human creatures' lives are at stake; but we can never decide otherwise. There is no high, *a priori* way of settling such a question. If the conscience of the community demands the establishment of a living wage for the workers, that of itself is a probable argument for its possibility; for whilst moral and economic interests are often directly antagonistic, nevertheless what is morally right is generally, sooner or later, economically possible. Of course, it does not follow from this that all that is economically possible is also morally right. Doubtless there are economic limits to the payment of wages, and they must be respected; but those limits can only be settled by experiment.

It is further contended that there are some industries which suffer from extreme competition—from foreign competition especially, with its cheap labour—which

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could not be carried on if a living wage were enacted. It is argued, sophistically enough, that this is a lamentable fact, but a fact nevertheless, and that surely it is better to have half a loaf than none at all. To this the convincing reply is that half a loaf is not better than none, looking at the question from a social standpoint; that it is better, on the whole, that such industries should go. As Professor Cunningham, of King's College, who has little sympathy with the demand for a living wage, says: 'If certain trades cannot be maintained in this country, except on terms which are permanently degrading to a section of the population, it is at least a question whether they should be maintained at all.'<sup>1</sup> But if such industries are discontinued, it is retorted, a host of unemployed are then cast upon the market. If further, in addition, a civilized, as distinguished from a living, wage is enacted or becomes prevalent through the force of public opinion or of trade organization, the numbers of the employed will be still further reduced, and the unemployed problem will become desperate. It might appear so at first sight, but there are one or two things to be remembered. The workers in employment would be in a greatly improved position, and their standard of living would quickly rise. If the work of education and christianization proceeds as it ought, the prosperous workers will make demands for all kinds of remunerative articles; their wants will become similar to those of the present middle classes. By all consent, the masses suffer from under-consumption in many directions, and, as Mr. Gunton, the eminent American economist, has shown in his *Wealth and Progress*, a rise in the standard of living upon the part of the working classes is the

<sup>1</sup> *Lombard Street in Lent*, p. 80.

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surest way to prosperity. The consequences of 'an effective demand,' as the economists call a demand that is able to justify itself, would be to stimulate production, to create new trades, and to reabsorb the unemployed. So far from deepening the unemployed problem, the securing of a living wage would greatly relieve it. Even if it were impossible to secure a living wage to the workers, it would be more heroic and just in a nation to refuse to tolerate any longer vast and menacing inequalities of income, and to demand that the general level shall be lowered if it cannot be raised, so that those who have insufficient may, by the brotherly action of those who have more than enough, be at least better able to support life.

The agitation for the living wage is an extension of the trade union movement. That movement has been on the whole a successful one, and has resulted in securing for several classes of workmen a living wage, and in not a few cases a civilized wage. The actions of trade unionists, which irritate masters, and often make it difficult for well-meaning employers to transact their business in the face of foreign and home competition, are all dictated by what is in the abstract a laudable desire—the desire to secure for the workman a minimum wage. Certainly, however much Trade Unionism has hampered production, it would have gone hard with skilled and even unskilled labour if the workers had not been thus able to protect themselves.

The recent miners' strike or lock-out was another and an express effort to obtain a living wage. It is still too near to judge of the final success of the movement.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The coal strike of 1895, which secured a minimum wage for the members of the Miners' Federation by an agreement *which has been renewed triennially ever since.*

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The coal-masters affirm still that the chief result has been to put trade into the hands of coal-owners in other districts and in other countries. The miners, who surely are most interested in the success of the movement, declare themselves satisfied with the result. One thing was very clear—that English public opinion, in this as in the dockers' strike, was in hearty sympathy with the movement.

The advocates of the living wage have the courage of their opinions—they quite agree with those who affirm that if a few industries obtain such a desirable wage, it will only result sooner or later in congesting those industries with labour and bringing wages down to the old level. The only safe action, they maintain, is general legislation, and they are prepared to produce schemes for assuring every worker a living wage, schemes which are to be made legal and compulsory. Two or three such schemes have been made public. One is by an Englishman, Mr. Alfred Morris, and another is by an American, Mr. William Howard.

Mr. Alfred Morris made his ideas public first of all in a novel, which attracted the late W. E. Gladstone's attention, entitled *A Minimum Wage*. This was in 1890. In 1893 he published a brochure entitled *Civilization's Missing Link*, in which he still further expounded his theories and defended them against objectors. Mr. Morris maintains that civilization must take the place of nature, and provide men with the means whereby to live—upon condition, of course, that they work for them. He demands that society, by means of parliamentary enactment, shall secure to the workman a minimum civilized wage. His words are: 'The real remedy is only to be found in following the example of Nature,



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which has fixed a minimum amount upon which a human being can exist in a crude fashion. Parliament must do the same in proportion to civilized requirements. It must decide, taking into consideration the cost of necessities, and the wants created by education, habits of cleanliness, clothing, food, and sanitary lodging, what is the lowest amount upon which an adult, male or female, can live. Having done so, it must pass a law that no man or woman shall be employed under that sum, which would be fixed for a certain number of hours, or at so much per hour. In the case of piece-work this figure is to form the minimum basis of calculations.' The minimum is to be for single, not married, persons, the married having to work longer hours, or in some other way enhance the value of their labour. This seems very hard upon the married, and likely to militate much against Mr. Morris's scheme. When we come to the question as to whence will come the means for paying this legalized wage, Mr. Morris is in no difficulty, however much his readers may be. He says that 'all that is proposed is that at whatever price an article is sold, low or high, the worker shall have at least a civilized portion of the profit. If there is not sufficient margin, then the social problem is only to be solved by the State reducing the standard of existence, instead of continually raising it. But there is a margin; the luxury enjoyed by some, and the full measure of comfort which is the lot of others, demonstrate without a doubt that the current prices of manufactures all over the world contain a profit which will sustain all in civilized comfort. To provide the workers with more, of course the non-workers and the higher classes of labour must accept less. We do not propose to add the worker's extra wage

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to the cost of an article, but to take it out of profit.' Mr. Morris thinks very little of the stock objections that foreign competition is in the way of this, and that it will drive capital out of the country. As to the former, he does not intend to touch prices; and as to the latter, capital cannot emigrate if it would—the land, machinery, &c., are fixtures, and these constitute the greater part of capital.

It must be admitted that Mr. Morris's remedy is heroic. His proposals are also rather vague and indefinite. Mr. Howard, of Washington, makes much more definite and interesting proposals. Mr. Howard's scheme merits consideration, because it is the product of thirty years' observation and thought. It further merits consideration because it was brought before the United States Senate in February 1894, by Senator Kyle, and referred by the Senate to the Committee on Education and Labour, and Mr. Howard's pamphlet was ordered to be printed. Further than that, as a result of the Committee's deliberations, in December 1894, the Senate passed a resolution submitted by Senator McPherson, directing that committee 'to ascertain in every practicable way the availability and advisability of establishing a national unit of value for labour, wherewith to automatically regulate wages without the intervention of either employer or employed, yet to the full satisfaction of their respective requirements.' Proposals which meet with such treatment from American statesmen, wedded as they are to a sturdy industrial individualism, must be worthy of English consideration.

After a number of general and excellent remarks upon the need for a fixed and secured civilized wage for 'the industrial,' as he neatly denominates the workman or

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employé, Mr. Howard makes his suggestions for the establishment of a national unit of value for labour. The State, he points out, 'to facilitate business and to preserve peace, has been obliged to establish national units of value for money, weight, measure, and time. Likewise, for the same imperative, beneficent purpose, the State should establish a national unit of value for labour, and thereby enable the industriant, without consulting his employer, to always earn what his life-necessities demand; and also enable the employer, without consulting the industriant, to always pay only what his true business necessities require.' No one would think of depreciating the units of value above named, or of diminishing the number of pence in a shilling, or of ounces in a pound, or of inches in a yard, or of seconds in a minute. Neither should any one have the right or the power to depreciate the content of a 'wage.' Mr. Howard proposes to determine a legal wage by adopting the idea of the sliding scale for wages, according to which wages vary with the selling price of the commodity produced. He suggests that a standard legal wage be fixed by the price of flour. This is the commodity most consumed by the industriant, and is a guide to the price of every other article of necessity, the prices of which vary in proportion to those of flour. After an inquiry extending over a quarter of a century, Mr. Howard comes to the conclusion that 'he who performs the least skilled manual work requires an amount of pay equal to the cost of 60 lb. in bulk of good family flour in the locality where his work is done.'

Mr. Howard demands that this should form the national unit of value for labour, and that the State should enact, under pains and penalties, that this should

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be 'the lowest pay that could legally be given to an adult for one day's least skilled manual work.' By this method, he thinks, the difficulty of endeavouring to fix any given sum as the legal wage may be avoided. This scheme is therefore free from the defects of that of Mr. Morris. The real value of Mr. Howard's legal wage would always remain the same, although the nominal or money value of it would fluctuate with the price of flour. The enactment of this 'wage' would in no way affect the different scales of payment in the different trades or grades of labour. If, for instance, an engineer's wage per day was twice that of a docker, then, on Mr. Howard's scheme, flour being a penny per pound, a docker would obtain 5s. a day (one 'wage,' or the cost of 60 lb. of flour), and the engineer 10s. a day (two 'wages,' or the cost of 120 lb. of flour). In other words, the docker would obtain 30s. a week for six days' work (hours to be fixed by the usual means), and the engineer £3. It would, of course, be the business of trade unions and of Government to see that the rates of piece-work were conformed to the standard of the legal 'wage.'

It will be seen that the assumption of Mr. Howard is that the proportional relations existing between the different grades of labour are constant ; in fact, he says 'the relative standing of industrial pursuits alters very slowly.' But there is a fear lest, under such a system as this, the relative standings of industrial pursuits will alter much more rapidly than they have ever before been known to do. The danger will be that employers, finding that they must pay labourers, porters, and others 30s. per week instead of 18s. per week, will endeavour to reimburse themselves, not from their customers, as Mr. Howard thinks they must, but from their more

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highly salaried servants. To prevent this, it would necessitate fixing by law the relative standings of industrial pursuits. But this would be almost impossible, for these are largely artificial, and depend upon changes in the social, intellectual, and moral conditions of society. Few Governments would venture upon this task, and if one did, it would meet with most strenuous opposition from the higher grades of labour, unless a new spirit of self-sacrifice came over society. In order to be absolutely sure of securing to every worker a wage 'whereby he may live comfortably in accordance with the grade of civilization to which his work belongs,' Mr. Howard must have either a legally fixed 'wage' in pounds of flour for each grade of labour, or by Act of Parliament fix permanently the proportions between the grades of labour. Mr. Howard claims for this proposal that it would take away all competition between employers for cheap labour and all possibility of labourers under-bidding each other. Although the increased cost of production must come from consumers, he thinks that competition will prevent prices from rising too high. Further, the increased wages will so far increase the consuming and purchasing power of the people as to bring to an end 'bad trade'—a consummation devoutly desired.

The objection to Parliamentary interference with wages upon the part of many is that it has been tried, and has failed, and that hundreds of years ago. Certainly, Mr. Howard's proposals are not absolutely new; they can be paralleled from English industrial history. As far back as the reign of Edward III the English Parliament tried to fix a legal wage. In 1350, according to Thorold Rogers, 'the money wages of all kinds of workmen, servants in husbandry, and artisans were fixed at certain

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rates, as long as wheat was under 6s. 8d. a quarter. - Mr. Howard will be told that this attempt, carried on through centuries, finally failed. But it is worth while asking whether the attempt did fail. If it failed, it was because it was an attempt to fix a maximum, not a minimum, wage—a wage above which no employer was to pay, not one below which no employer was to pay. That part of the movement did fail. But the motives were very different from modern motives. The motives were to prevent extortionate labour-charges at a time of great scarcity, to prevent labour taking advantage of society's necessities. The Acts also were passed by the masters themselves in their own interests, and then administered by them in their own interests. The proposal to-day is to fix a minimum wage in order that Capital may not take advantage of Labour's necessities, and the Acts will be made by the people themselves through their own representatives, and carried out by themselves in their own interests—interests which are identical with the general interests of society.

But it must not be thought that the attempts to keep *down* wages by legal means were failures; they were finally successful—only too successful. These are one or two of the facts: In the first half of the seventeenth century the price of wheat rose to 55s. and more per quarter, and wages were kept down to less than 6d. a day. In 1795 the Berkshire magistrates decided that when the 'gallon loaf' cost 1s., the labourer should receive from the parish 6d. a day for himself and 3d. a day for each of his family, and for every rise of 1d. in the price of a loaf he should receive an increase of 3d. a week for himself and 1d. a week for each of his

<sup>1</sup> *The Economic Interpretation of History*, ii. 27.

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children. This legislation, of course, resulted in relieving employers at the expense of the ratepayers, and at the same time kept wages down to a starvation level. The policy of those times, which resembled that of Mr. Howard, only with the diametrically opposite purpose, was quite successful. This is what Thorold Rogers says about it: 'The English Statute-book contains many atrocious Acts, most of them with hypocritical preambles. The Act of Elizabeth (which enacted that wages were to be fixed by Quarter Sessions assessments) is, in my judgement, the most infamous of them all, for it was levelled against every right of the poor to live, and entirely in the interests of rent. The magistrates duly met, and issued their schedule of wages. I have discovered thirteen of them. They invariably prescribe wages which I am sure, from the evidence of prices, would not, even if the peasant had continuous employment, find bread for him and his household.'<sup>1</sup> Evidently, then, Parliament, when it represented only landowners and employers, succeeded in enacting and enforcing, after a long struggle, a 'starvation' wage. Why should it not succeed, when it represents the employed, in enacting and enforcing a 'living' wage?

There is so much misapprehension as to the results of the experiments made by Parliament to regulate wages, that it is worth while giving another quotation from Thorold Rogers. In his Oxford lecture on *Legislation on Labour and its Effects*, referring to the thirteen assessments he had discovered, he says: 'I believe they were discontinued during the eighteenth century, not because the law was neglected, but because the assessment had effectually done the work for which it was

<sup>1</sup> *The Economic Interpretation of History*, xi. 241.

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designed, the labourer's wages being now reduced to a bare subsistence.'<sup>1</sup> This would have been securing the living wage by Act of Parliament ; but it was not so good as that, for, as Professor Rogers says afterwards, 'the justices in Quarter Session took no note, as the Statute instructed them, of "the cheapness or dearness of provisions."' Their object was to get labour at starvation wages,'<sup>2</sup> and they succeeded in their object. These precedents, therefore, tell for, and not against, State legislation for 'a living wage,' and raise hopes that the solution of this urgent problem is neither impossible nor distant. That it is neither impossible nor distant may now be seen by the experiments and experiences of one or two British colonies and by the proposals now before our own Parliament (1907).

In New Zealand, in 1896, the law for compulsory arbitration came into operation, and led to the fixing of a standard minimum wage for skilled labour, which undergoes periodic revision. The Arbitration Act has worked well in New Zealand for eleven years. In Australia, the Victorian Wages Board was established in 1896, and amended in 1900 and 1903. It has undeniably prevented sweating in many trades, and has secured a minimum wage for unskilled workers. But it is alleged that it has tended to reduce the wages of skilled labourers, and the demand, in some quarters, is that a minimum wage be now fixed for skilled labour also. Bills have been introduced into the British Parliament for establishing similar wages boards, upon which employer and employed would be represented, for the purposes of fixing a minimum wage for certain 'sweated' trades, to

<sup>1</sup> *The Economic Interpretation of History*, ii. 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 41.



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be scheduled by the Home Secretary. The movement, therefore, has got within the realm of practical politics. Militarism in France, Germany, and Japan has made one thing possible—the determination upon a scientific basis of the minimum diet necessary for efficiency. At the British Association, in 1906, Dr. F. G. Hopkins quoted the results of investigations by Professor Voit, of Munich, and the confirmations by Professors Atwater and Chittenden, of the United States, that for the average body under average conditions the standard for moderate work was 3,050 calories (heat-producing elements) and 118 grains of proteid (nitrogenous substances). Civilization is then not far from discovering the necessary elements, biological, physiological, economic, and legislative, with which to forge its last link for binding men together in one bundle of healthy physical and mental life.



IX  
THE LABOUR  
WAR



## IX

### THE LABOUR WAR

Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just ;  
And he but naked, though locked up in steel,  
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

SHAKESPEARE.

A GREAT contrast exists between the condition of the labour world at the beginning of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the beginning of the nineteenth century industry was domestic and disorganized ; at the beginning of the twentieth century it is concentrated in cities and organized, and labour is drilled and disciplined into a huge army. Its serried and orderly ranks and regiments may be seen in works, factories, mills, railways, and houses of business. Great credit is due to those wise captains of our industry and commerce who throughout this century have marshalled and manipulated these hosts. Great credit is also due to the rank and file, who must have originally possessed strong instincts of obedience and order to have made such organization of industry possible. Those knew how to command, these how to obey.

But what of the present spirit of this great army ? An ideal army is loyal, obedient, enthusiastic, eager to

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advance, ready to suffer hardship, devoted to its leaders. Such certainly is not the spirit of the labour army of to-day. Almost from the first there has been some disaffection. From the days of the Chartists and Luddites to the days of the Socialists, it has been inclined to murmur and mutiny. The rebellious spirit has so increased that right up to the end of the nineteenth century the industrial community may be said to have been in a constant state of civil war. It is important to investigate the causes and consequences of this internecine strife.

The labour army is often called a 'mercenary army.' It is accused of lack of interest in the cause of commerce; of lack of loyalty, of greed and selfishness, of brutality and vice. These are certainly the characteristics of mercenary military armies, such, for instance, as those (Swiss and Scotch) which fought the battles of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Whatever truth there is in the above charge—and he would be bold who would deny that there is some truth—it may easily be seen to arise out of the very nature of a mercenary army. The army of labour, like all mercenary military armies, is a hired army, organized upon the wages system. The only nexus is a cash nexus. It has, therefore, an arbitrary, and not a natural, interest in industry, and this will account for much indifference and discontent. It is, in common with all mercenary armies, liable to dismissal and disbandment upon failure of funds, or change of market, or caprice of master. What wonder, then, that the soldiers of labour are ready to desert him who pays them sixpence an hour in favour of him who will pay them sevenpence!

This is one of the prime causes of discontent in the labour army. It audibly or silently objects to this

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mercenary principle of hiring, and it refuses to believe that it passes the wit of man to reorganize labour upon some other and better basis. This is why it looks so kindly at times upon the wildest and most Utopian schemes of social reform. It longs to eliminate from life and labour the present precariousness. The British regular army, drilled for battles of blood, has its system of promotions and pensions, and, above all, its great motive, 'King and country.' The labour army of to-day is sullen and mutinous for lack of some similar motive, some similar hope, and some similar certainty. The labourers long to be delivered from suspense and uncertainty as to the prospect of their children's bread, from their constant liability to disbandment. They cry for security of tenure, steadiness of employment. They have no wish to prey upon the labour market or upon society, as the disbanded military mercenaries used to prey upon the cities and countries of Europe. They wish to obtain bread neither by force nor by fraud; they cry not for charity, but for justice. Hence they will fight for Socialism, or for any other system which promises to save them from the 'mercenary' principle.

The labour army aims at the overturn or the radical modification of the present wages system. But this is not the work of a day or a year, and in the meantime the labour army has another cause of discontent and quarrel—what may be called the share-of-the-spoils question. Even a mercenary, wages-system, cash-nexus army expects a fair share of the spoils. Mercenary military armies, whatever their wages, expected, when the battle was done and won, a good share of the spoils of war and victory. Their expectations were always realized; they obtained much more than their bare wages. The mercenary

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industrial army, likewise, is not content with its wages of subsistence, or even with wages regulated by a decent standard of comfort. It demands a share of the profits of industry, reckoned, not with any reference to its subsistence wants, save in a protectory sense, but with reference to the value of the product or of the net profits.

The captains of industry march off with too much of the booty—far too much—and the labourers would restrain them. In their sober moments the workers recognize that, so far as profits are concerned, there are three factors in production—labour, capital, and management—and that each is alike necessary. But they maintain that labour is systematically defrauded of its full share by means of the wages system, or the farce of a so-called ‘free contract,’ under which the labourer is ‘free’ either to work at an unjust wage or starve.

Carlyle’s way of putting the case much commends itself to the labourer when he reads it, as true to fact. At the conquest of England, William the Conqueror divided the spoils with his knights; but that renowned captain of industry, Plugson of St. Dolly Undershot, when his battle is fought and won, ‘pays off’ his army, and marches away with his £100,000 or his millions.<sup>1</sup>

These are the general causes of the labour war of the end of the century; local conflicts were but species of the same genus. Occasionally industrialism as a whole closes up its hostile ranks, unites its forces of Capital and Labour against the common enemy—hunger, need, or ruin; but it soon falls asunder again. Mutual distrust is engendered by the above causes, and strikes, lock-outs, and disputes innumerable are

<sup>1</sup> *Past and Present*, book iii, chap. x.



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destined to arise from them for yet many days, the general question being one not of quick or easy solution.

But the Christian Church ought to be able at least to ameliorate the conditions of the strife. It is hers to point out that the battles of Capital and Labour are not usually over abstract general principles : they are over particular concrete applications or illustrations of them. Hence it should be a first rule for the parties to these special industrial disputes to be sure that the local cause be a just one. Some trades are by nature precarious, and it would be folly to fight the battle of permanence with employers in these. Some employers attempt to share profits by systems of regular advance and promotion, by bonuses, shares, and pensions. It would be unjust to visit the sins of others, or of a system from which they were trying themselves to escape, upon the heads of such wise and humane employers. Labour should ever be sure of a just and real grievance ; its attacks ought not to be dictated by selfish and inconsiderate greed, or its campaigns undertaken for frivolous reasons, nor should it emulate its opponents, by making necessity—the necessity of employers—its opportunity. Labour should not grow arrogant, unjustly championing the cause of individuals, when the offence is rank. It must beware, in a word, lest it become a blind Samson, who, in his eagerness to avenge himself upon the Philistines, overwhelmed himself as well as his enemies in destruction. Similar counsels are equally necessary for Capital, as industrial history often distressingly reveals.

It should be a standing rule with both combatants that war must be utterly unavoidable. The appeal to force is always irrational and degrading ; before ever it is resorted to, ‘ the resources of civilization ’ should always

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be exhausted. If justice can be secured in no other way, if appeal to force be inevitable, as the very last and only resort, then it should be entered upon in a civilized spirit, with a due sense of the miseries of industrial strife to both sides in the conflict, and to the community at large. The great object-lessons which the Dock strike, the Coal strike, and other famous strikes have presented, of the way in which such conflicts involve the whole community in misery and loss, as well as the industries concerned, should give men everywhere pause before they lightly enter upon industrial warfare. In 'striking,' Labour not only 'strikes' in self-defence and for justice, but it also strikes down many of its own friends, and many innocents, who will never rise again. In 'lock-outs,' Capital locks out not only its men, but innocent women and children, many of whom are finally, by this means, 'locked out' of the gate of life altogether, as in the memorable Penrhyn business. There is need in the industrial community for a more vivid realization of the horrors and devastations of industrial war, and that upon both sides.

Another very necessary rule of industrial warfare is that the fight be fair. The late Lord Derby once defined the duty of the State in relation to industrial disputes as that of 'keeping the ring'—in other words, of seeing that the fight be fair. We have now a higher conception of the office of the State in these matters. It is increasingly felt that, in the interest of the State itself, it behoves her to become, if possible, the peacemaker between Capital and Labour; but when she cannot do that, certainly it is her duty, as the late Lord Derby asserted, to see that the fight be fair. But it is still more the combatants' business to see that the fight be fair. There are two kinds of fight-

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ing : savage, and—not Christian—no fighting is Christian—but savage and civilized. Industrial warfare should ever be civilized warfare ; there should be no tomahawking, no scalping-knife methods. In a fight with Indians a decade ago, some United States soldiers so far forgot themselves, in their fury at the fiendish cruelties of the Indians, as to slay Indian women with babes at the breast. This conduct justly extorted a cry of execration from the civilized world. Industrialists in their fury—both capitalists and labourers—are liable also to slay women with infants at their breasts, but by the more cruel method of slow starvation.

The methods of industrial warfare must be civilized, not savage. The victories gained on either side must be chivalrous victories, not, as they sometimes have been, in the vindictive spirit afterwards shown towards the vanquished, mere Choctaw triumphs—massacres, not victories. The workers must strive to be true ‘Knights of Labour’ on the field of industrial battle. They must refrain from unrighteous and illegal intimidation, from violence and from all incitements thereto, from misrepresentation and defamation. Both sides should learn to fight fair, like true Englishmen. Capitalists should refrain from the above method also, and should refuse to avail themselves of the political or civil powers—such as Parliament, the law, the military, or the police—over which, by virtue of their social position, they have control, to aid them in their personal quarrels with Labour. This meanness should be beneath the dignity of Christians and gentlemen, of those who are the heirs of chivalry. It ill becomes such also to use ‘starving-out’ or Penrhyn methods of industrial warfare, or vindictively to crush the conquered. When Lord Suffolk, during the American

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War of Independence, defended the employment of savages in America by the British Government, on the ground that 'it was perfectly allowable to use all the means that God and nature had put into our hands,' he evoked from Lord Chatham a burst of indignant and eloquent remonstrance, which rang through England. Very frequently a similar unscrupulosity, as un-English and inhuman as it is hypocritical, is manifested in industrial struggles to-day, and that not only in South Africa or on the Congo. There is need to remember that all is not fair in war. The employment of Pinkerton gangs, on the one hand, or of ratteners and rioters on the other, can never be sanctioned.

This may seem a mere counsel of perfection—another day-dream—but that does not alter its truth or its ethical necessity. Nor is this all. Such civilized laws of industrial conflict would certainly ameliorate and humanize the apparently inevitable conflict of Labour and Capital under the present system ; but, after all, they are merely laws for the 'present distress.' Industrial war must, sooner or later, disappear, if Christianity is to triumph in the industrial sphere. War is wholly un-Christian, military or industrial. The resort to force is unbrotherly, contrary to love ; it is irrational, contrary to reason ; brutal, contrary to humanity. It cannot determine the question of justice, it merely determines that of strength.

In the main, the interests of Capital and Labour are identical—certainly all their permanent interests are, if their temporary interests are not, and therefore their strife is suicidal as well as fratricidal. Wherever their interests are not identical, the appeal should be made to reason, discussion, and persuasion. Both sides should deliberately

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and untiringly aim at the perfecting of methods of consultation, conciliation, and arbitration, and should carefully consider the question of the State enactment of compulsory arbitration in disputes and also the experiments in that matter in our colonies. To remedy the natural grievances and injustices of Labour, all parties in the State—the Christian Church pre-eminently—should foster the movement for making the labourer master of his product, by putting him in possession of the means of production, whether by systems of technical education, co-operative production, industrial partnership, municipal Socialism, or by other practicable methods. In the meantime, vast relief would immediately come if both masters and men became real Christians—servants of Christ on the week-day, not on the Sundays only; in business and at work, as well as at church or at home—real, not nominal, Christians. Enough would still remain to be done, taxing all the best qualities of heart and brain; but the appearance, in numbers large enough to affect the policy of the commercial and industrial world, of Christians who were bent upon applying the principles of the Sermon on the Mount most rigorously to their own financial and industrial affairs, without mercy to their own selfishness and class prejudice, would bring in at once a new industrial era. If the men of the modern industrial world would only welcome Jesus Christ into their camps, mighty miseries would soon abate, and ‘war would be no more.’



X

THE CLAIMS OF  
MANUAL LABOUR





## X

### THE CLAIMS OF MANUAL LABOUR

These hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.—ST. PAUL.

MUCH is heard in these times of the claims of manual labour. In every market-place demands are made for it which cannot be justified. We are continually told that inasmuch as the wealth of England is the creation of the manual labourers, that wealth ought to belong to the labouring classes, and that the classes which possess the major portion of it are guilty of stealing.

So they would be if the premise that all wealth is the creation of manual labour were correct, but unfortunately it is not. In fact, no more cruelly misleading statement could possibly be made. That manual labour is a necessary factor in production no sane man denies ; and that manual labour has been, and is, hardly and unjustly treated, few instructed and unprejudiced men doubt. But to set up for it the claim that all wealth belongs to it because it is the creator of it all, as do many Socialists, must be due either to gross ignorance or wilful blindness.

This much-asseverated claim has very little foundation in fact.<sup>1</sup> The wealth of England is not a vast hereditary

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 155-168.

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hoard, the result of ages of human industry and saving, but is of comparatively recent origin. It has been obtained far more by the invention of machinery, the application of modern science to industry and commerce, and the organizing skill, enterprise, and sagacity of the modern captains of industry; in a word, far more by intellectual than by manual labour. But for the play of intellect upon commerce and industry, labour would have still been drudging on like a blind and bound Samson. As the late Lord Playfair once said correctly in the *Contemporary Review*, the labour of quantity is continually decreasing in value as a factor in production, and the labour of quality increasing. Brain-labour is a more important factor in the production of wealth than hand-labour. As muscular strength is of little value to an individual without the intelligence to direct and apply it, so manual labour is now of small worth to society in the absence of the creating and directing intelligence. The labourers, skilled artisans as they were, who built the great bascule bridge across the Thames from the Tower, would have made a poor show in the absence of Sir Horace Jones, the architect, and Sir John Wolfe Wolfe-Barry, the engineer. The claim of the manual labourers for a larger share of the produce of modern industry is a just one, and also their claim for more protection, for better conditions of labour and life, and for more leisure; but their claim for all the wealth of England is about as unfounded and as ridiculous as any claim could well be.

But the claims of the manual labouring class and the claims of manual labour itself are two very different things. These latter are not sufficiently regarded in modern society. The increasing complexity of industrial life tends to withdraw too many from a share in the

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manual labour of the world, with the result of constituting the manual labouring class almost into a helot class, and of depriving men in multitudes of healthy self-discipline. The possibility of living without working at all, either manually or mentally, tends to create amongst the propertied classes a set of dangerous social parasites. The vastness of the work of distribution has created also a class of brain-workers—middle-men, managers, warehousemen, assistants, clerks, and others, with their accompanying host of financiers, bankers, company-promoters, and stock-and-share-dealers, all of whom are also divorced from regular manual toil. In addition to these there are the professional classes, who also know nothing of such labour. Within the world of labour itself the transformation is proceeding—men are now graded largely into machine-inventors, machine-makers, and machine-minders. The machine industry thus divorces whole classes from manual labour altogether, and masses others into fetid, hideous, and deafening cities, workshops, and factories, creating communities which are entirely artificial and unnatural.

This decay of manual labour is to be deplored both in the interests of the individual and of society. It is a natural, a divine discipline, not to be evaded without incurring corresponding penalties. It is well worth while asking what is lost by evading it, for the inventive mind of modern man and the course of capitalistic civilization are evidently tending still further to eliminate the simplest, roughest, and most primitive forms of labour from the life of man, relegating them first to a helot class, and finally to machines. Man no longer ploughs, sows, harrows, reaps, or weeds the soil—machines do it; and where machines do not do it, the

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work is left to the few, who work with unremitting and degrading toil for a pittance, whilst the millions are massed in teeming cities, leading an unhealthy and artificial life. And in those very cities men are no longer found providing for their wants with their own skilled hands, but stand watching the machines make their bread, their clothes, their boots, and their furniture. They no longer spin and weave themselves: their machines spin and weave for them. Science and invention are steadily superseding the use of human faculties and human limbs in many directions, and radically changing the conditions of human existence. We ought to consider whither we are tending. Doubtless 'there's a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will,' but it is our prerogative not to be blind to the meaning of changes, but to manipulate masterfully those which threaten our moral and physical well-being.

Now, it is evident that all who are, whether willingly or unwillingly, divorced from manual labour are so far out of touch with some of the primal realities of human existence. Manual labour is a discipline of mind, muscle, and nerve which mankind can ill afford to dispense with, and that because it is a natural discipline. No artificial labours, play-labour, mimic-labour, can ever take the place of natural human labour. The point is, not that man has no right to use his intelligence to lighten laborious toil or to increase his material comfort and reasonable luxury, but that he has no right entirely to remit, as he already does in so many classes of the community, and promises to do in all, a vital natural discipline. It seems to be certain that he will suffer in mind, body, and estate—indeed, is already so doing.

Manual labour is really, as Emerson says, 'the study

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of the external world.' Not only, therefore, do men lack the physical and nervous advantages of manual labour, but the mental advantages also. Whole masses of modern men live all their lives in an artificial world; not once, to the day of their death, do they come into real contact with primal physical verities, with external nature. The manual toiler is brought into fellowship with nature, in perhaps a dim, unconscious way, but in a way far more real than the non-toiling classes, who bring to nature only reflectiveness and sentimentality. His contact with nature, as he pits his thews and sinews against it, is close, vital, and natural; theirs is external and artificial. The difference is seen in the effects upon character. Manual labour gives a strength and simplicity to character, which no sentimental survey of nature ever does. Poets and novelists, moralists and artists, know this truth well, and go for all that is best, simplest, most primal and vital in the physical, moral, and mental nature of man, to the classes who are in daily communion with nature in their work. As Emerson says, 'Every man ought to stand in primary relations with the work of the world, ought to do it himself, and not suffer the accident of his having a purse in his pocket, or his having been bred to some dishonourable craft, to sever him from those duties—and for this reason, that labour is God's education.'<sup>1</sup>

This being so, what is wanted is some wise revision of human society which shall restore all men alike to that which is a God-appointed discipline, and a God-appointed means of a real knowledge of nature. This cannot be accomplished by any Quixotic or Utopian individual experiments—human society must move altogether, like

<sup>1</sup> In *Essays: Man the Reformer*, p. 281. (Walter Scott & Co.)

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Wordsworth's cloud, if it move at all. The work for the individual is to preach the ideal, to teach the truth, to form public opinion. Society is already moving in a healthier and wiser direction. In elementary education, and in secondary also, it has long been felt that education has been too entirely mental, with the result that children are just beginning to receive manual and technical training, are being put into possession of their limbs, senses, and faculties, as well as of their memories. They are being fitted to wrestle with matter, to fulfil a primal necessity of human life, to receive a natural education. But the movement cannot stop here. The revision of education involves an accompanying reorganization of social and industrial life. To send the child forward into life with trained aptitudes for manual labour, skilled or unskilled (to adopt an artificial distinction), and then for it to find no opportunity to gratify and exercise those powers, is the height of irrationality, and will be to invite social difficulty. Jewish education demanded that every child should be taught a handicraft, no matter of what station in life—hence we see Paul, as an educated Jew, able in an emergency to earn his living by the labour of his hands, and our Lord Himself practising the trade of a carpenter. But the logical result of such a system of education is that the adult should be expected, and should have the opportunity, of using his or her powers, and thus become at once economically independent—a producer as well as a consumer—obtain a necessary discipline, and enjoy the fellowship which comes from wrestling with nature—with the external world. Man, like Antaeus, will be strongest when he has his feet firmly planted upon Earth. Contact with her will infuse into him a native

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strength which he cannot elsewhere obtain. Made 'independent' of physical toil, as it is called, lifted above his native heath by artificial means, man becomes, with all his artificial glamour and display, if not a moral and physical weakling, at least a maimed mortal.

But if every man is to devote some portion of his time to manual labour, will this not depreciate the quality of the higher kinds of work? Will the preacher, the teacher, the scientist, the artist, the poet, be able to serve society as well? Will not their work suffer? Their work may certainly lose something in fineness, in elaboration, in subtlety, in cunning, but it will surely gain much more than it loses, for it will gain in strength, serenity, insight, reality, virility, truth to life. The speaker, the thinker, the observer, and the fine craftsman, cannot but be the better for contact with nature in the only real way—in the wrestle of work. Nor must it be forgotten that these professional classes already find physical exercise a necessity. The time taken in physical exercises of a monotonous, or mechanical, or unproductive order could be better employed in real work. If the former are not found incompatible with a high quality of mental work, neither would the latter be. Emerson well says that 'no separation from labour can be without some loss of power and of truth to the seer himself. I doubt not the vices and faults of our literature and philosophy, their too great fineness, effeminacy, and melancholy, are attributable to the enervated and sickly habits of the literary class. Better that the book should not be quite so good, and the bookmaker abler and better, and not himself often a ludicrous contrast to all that he has written.'<sup>1</sup> These are words well worth

<sup>1</sup> *Man the Reformer*, p. 282.

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pondering over in this physically 'unfit' age, this period of *décadent* literature, which is accompanied by such prolific evils. Thoreau says: 'Steady labour with the hands, which engrosses the attention also, is unquestionably the best method of sending palaver and sentimentality out of one's style, both in speaking and writing.'<sup>1</sup> And in his *Walden* he utters words of wisdom similar to those of Emerson: 'The student who secures his coveted leisure and retirement by systematically shirking any labour necessary to man, obtains but an ignoble and unprofitable leisure, defrauding himself of the experience which alone makes leisure fruitful. "But," says one, "you do not mean that students should go to work with their hands instead of their heads?" I do not mean that exactly, but I mean something which he might think a good deal like that. I mean that they should not *play* life or *study* it merely, while the community supports them at this expensive game, but earnestly *live* it from beginning to end. How could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment of living?'

Another difficulty in the way of every man doing justice to the claims of manual labour is that society would thereby forfeit all the economical advantages of the division of labour. This is supposed to be the triumph of organized industry; and it would certainly be a return to a very primitive, if not a barbaric, condition of things, if every man took upon himself to supply all his own wants by his own labours. There are not wanting those who in their reaction from the excessive subdivision of labour, and the evils which have followed in its train, have advocated even this backward step. Bondareff, the Russian, quoted by Count Tolstoi, says

<sup>1</sup> *A Week on the Concord*, p. 90.



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that 'sin proceeds solely from the evasion of the law : "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." The first, chief, and most immutable duty of man is this obligation to earn his bread by the labour of his hands, understanding thereby all the heavy, coarse work which must be undertaken to save him from dying of cold and hunger, to obtain bread, and drink, and clothing, and housing, and fuel. This law, which has hitherto been accepted only of necessity, must be acknowledged as a righteous law of life obligatory on all.'

Tolstoi himself declares that this law can only be avoided by what he calls 'the cunning, fiendish doctrine of division of labour.' He exhorts modern men thus : 'Stand in line ! begin with your weak, unpractised hands the first work that feeds the hungry and clothes the naked—begin the "bread-labour," the struggle with nature, and for the first time you will feel solid ground under your feet ; you will feel at home, free and steadfast, and that you need go no further. You will experience those real, unpoisoned joys which can be found nowhere else—no, not behind doors and curtains.' Society, for its sins, has had such John Baptists as Tolstoi and Edward Carpenter sent to rebuke it. The asceticism of these noble-minded men is, however, a mere tonic, and not good for human nature's daily food. Much more sane is the view of Emerson, who is glad when such an example is set, for he says : 'When many persons shall have done this, when the majority shall admit the necessity of reform, abuses will be redressed, and the way will be open again to the advantages which arise from the division of labour.' This is certain, that nothing but a revived sense of the dignity of labour—its dignity, that is, as performed by *me*, not another—will

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save us from straying far from the assigned path of social and spiritual well-being.

The immediate task, therefore, is to redeem labour from the hereditary contempt into which it has fallen. In communities based on slavery, it can easily be understood that manual labour, undertaken only by slaves, should be despised by freemen ; but it ought not to be in Christendom, where the nature of man, elevated by the Incarnation, dignifies the most menial toil, and where the example of Christ Himself and that of His first followers sanctifies for ever manual labour. Mediaeval monks bravely tried by personal example to redeem it from the contempt which came upon it in Christendom, but military ages intervened, and cast scorn upon slow, peaceful, and laborious methods of earning a living ; and capitalistic ages succeeded them, with rapid means of gaining wealth and rank, and taught men to despise those who had need to toil manually ; and so it has come to pass that it is now thought degrading for men to soil their hands with actual work. Our colonists in Africa—South and East and West—will not do it, and regard the natives who do it as essentially inferior—a significantly heathen attitude which the High Commissioner, Lord Selborne, has recently rebuked at Johannesburg. But more Christian conceptions must be entertained of labour and labourers. So far from being despised for their hard, rough, dirty work, they must be honoured—nay, more, envied ! They perform a work which places society under a deep obligation to them—the more lowly and disagreeable the toil, the greater the obligation ; and they are, after all, nearer to the heart of things, in closer touch with the realities of life, for they ‘ worship at the temple’s inner shrine.’

XI  
THE FUNCTION  
OF FRIENDLY  
SOCIETIES



## XI

### THE FUNCTION OF FRIENDLY SOCIETIES<sup>1</sup>

The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee ; nor, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you.—ST. PAUL.

IT is as true of human society in general as it is of that particular portion of it, the Christian Church, that ‘the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee ; nor, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you.’ No one portion of society is independent of the other portions ; all are members one of another. It is extremely necessary for all parts of the body politic to remember this, for occasionally both its upper and its lower members endeavour in turn to dispense with each other. Now the hand exclaims, ‘Out with the eye !’ and the feet, ‘Off with the head !’ And anon the eye would dispense with the hand, and the head with the feet. The sin of ‘the eye and the head’ is more frequent and more to be expected than the sin of ‘the hands and the feet,’ yet it is the more heinous, as a sin against light and knowledge.

There is what may be called, in the highest sense of

<sup>1</sup> Delivered before the Friendly Societies of Hunslet, Leeds, June 1890.

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the word, an 'aristocracy' of the working classes, as well as of the 'upper' classes—viz. that portion which gathers itself into friendly societies, trade-unions, and co-operative societies. This section of the working classes needs to develop an increasing sense of relationship with and responsibility towards the lower working classes. Such a deepening sense of relationship and responsibility is necessary to the very existence of both.

Mr.<sup>1</sup> Charles Booth states that 35 per cent. of the population of East London is below the line of poverty—that is, worse than 'poor.' He analyzes that 35 per cent. into classes, and finds that 11 per cent. are 'very poor,' and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. are semi-criminal; these two classes together number 110,000, out of a population of 800,000 working people. Mr. Booth declares that they are the crux of the question of poverty in East London, and therefore everywhere else.

It is of the first importance to the community at large, and especially to the working classes immediately above them, that these two classes should, if possible, be improved out of existence. Mr. Booth has his own plans for dealing with them—he would harry the semi-criminal class out of existence by the police, and find compulsory State employment for the 'very poor.' Into these remedies there is no need here to enter; but the facts are very instructive. These utterly poverty-stricken, crime-haunted classes exist in sufficiently large proportions in all the large towns and cities of England to constitute, if not an imminent peril, yet a very grave evil, not to be tolerated a day longer than necessary. Their abolition, and the abolition (by improving them out of existence) of the 'poor' classes immediately above

<sup>1</sup> Now 'Rt. Hon.'

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them, is a question of the first importance to the working classes earning regular wages and fairly comfortable. To the middle and upper classes, these very poor are not a direct and immediate peril—to them they are more an object of compassionate interest than anything else ; but to the comfortable working classes they are a constant hindrance and a constant menace.

By their competition, their pressing needs, their lack of combination, they lower wages ; by their thriftlessness, poverty, vice, and crime, they raise both rates and taxes. They thus damage the resources of the better working classes at both ends ; they decrease their income and increase their expenditure. Nor is this all : as long as they continue to live in the close proximity they do, their dirt and disease defile the dwellings and poison the air of the given districts, whilst, at the same time, their idle and vicious habits lower the moral tone of the localities. Then, if the respectable working classes are forced to remove, in order to escape the danger and degradation of their presence, they are driven often into social isolation, industrial inconvenience, and increased expense, and these low classes are left to greater recklessness and neglect. The higher working classes may escape, by removal, from the moral and physical contamination of their depraved and impoverished brethren, but they cannot escape from the drain, direct or indirect, upon their none-too-great resources. It is, therefore, of great practical importance to them that these classes should be raised in the moral and social scale.

Mere charity will not solve their problem ; if it would, it would long ago have been solved, for the generosity of the working classes towards the unfortunate and needy amongst them is proverbial. But these dejected

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and degraded classes can stand much poverty. Their better-to-do neighbours might drain themselves dry, and yet not satisfy their horse-leech propensity. A social problem is half solved when once it is understood, and therefore it is the business of those most concerned to make the condition of these forlorn classes the subject of deep, wise, and sympathetic study.

In the prosecution of this study, it is helpful to remember that, as Mr. Charles Booth says, there are three branches of the problem—there are questions of employment, questions of circumstances, and questions of habit, to be considered. These are perhaps difficult to disentangle, for they act, and react, and involve each other; but it is a great aid to both thought and action to remember them. There are the physical causes of poverty—poverty caused by sickness, preventable disease, insanitation, unhealthy dwellings, large families, &c. ; and there are the social, or economic, causes of poverty—poverty caused by lack of employment, vicissitude of trade, new machinery, insufficient wages, lack of trade organizations, defective intelligence, training and skill. The most pressing economic need of the ‘very poor’ is organization of work and organization of leisure—some means by which to defend themselves against unfair and undue pressure, and some way of utilizing enforced hours of leisure, as in technical training or literary cultivation, so as to increase facility in changing employment, or, at least, prevent demoralization. These depressed classes need to be helped to a threefold insurance—an insurance against sickness, an insurance against starvation, and an insurance against lack of work.

Nor must the moral causes of poverty be overlooked.



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No doubt physical and economic causes occupy a chief place in this problem, but moral causes also largely enter into it. Much of the poverty of the lower labouring classes is self-caused—caused by sheer laziness, by drink, gambling, and vicious living. There is as truly a ‘leisured class’ amongst the working classes as amongst the upper classes—a class which will not work, yet loves to eat; which goes about seeking what and whom it may devour, preying upon families and upon society, upon women and children, and those who do work. It is an absolute anomaly to count such amongst the *working* classes; such do not even belong to the *workless* classes, but to the *idle* classes. The moral condition of such people must be improved, or else, so far as they are concerned, all will be of no avail.

This can be best done by the respectable working classes. The middle and upper classes may contribute something from their education, leisure, and wealth, but those who understand the position and social needs of these unfortunates almost from experience, and at least from near proximity, will have to do most of the work of raising them; they best can reach them, and adapt and work the methods and machinery of reform.

Such a mission should make a manifold appeal to the better working classes. It should appeal to their instinct of self-preservation. It is to them a life-and-death matter. If they would save themselves from demoralization and destruction, if they would gain and retain for themselves, their wives and children, an adequate income, sweeter and more wholesome surroundings, and a purer moral atmosphere, they must take up this task. It should appeal also to their instinct of pity. The debased and brutalized condition of these their brothers and sisters—

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their poverty, squalor, and filth, their vice and immorality, their low standards of life and conduct, and the way in which they are exploited, ground down, and oppressed—should appeal to their compassion.

Such a work, undertaken by the upper working classes with earnestness and enthusiasm, would react upon them as a noble self-discipline. Young working men would then have no time for a wasteful and shameful amount of recreation and amusement, for a wicked expenditure of money in excessive football, cricket, cycling, and other sports—in drinking, gambling, and impurity. It would be their physical and moral salvation if they devoted some of their leisure to investigating the causes of these social evils and perils, by personal observation and study. It would stimulate and develop their intellect and sympathy.

When they came to deal practically with the moral part of the problem, not the least benefit it would bring would be a new sense of the value of the Christian religion, of the unique power there is in the Lord Jesus Christ to impart and maintain, both in themselves and in those they try to reform, an adequate zeal for goodness, purity, justice, and truth. They would discover that the best moral and spiritual equipment for the devoted, untiring, and successful service of man is personal surrender of the will and heart to Jesus Christ.

There is another, though quite different, direction in which there is need to cultivate between two portions of modern society a mutual sense of responsibility, viz. between the Christian Church and friendly societies. The relationship between these is far closer than some are inclined to think—it is an historic relationship. The Christian Church itself was first taken cognisance of by

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the Roman Empire as a friendly society. It was registered as a burial club, when it was found that the Christians were a brotherhood, providing for their own sick, aged, and poor, and burying their own dead. But interesting as this coincidence is, the connexion is still more truly historical. The Christian Church is not simply the mother friendly society in Europe, and that in the most literal sense, but modern friendly societies, which may be traced back to the mediæval gilds, and were mainly of ecclesiastical origin, may be said to be the creation of the Christian Church.

The Christian Church during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in order to protect burghers and craftsmen in those lawless and coercive times, created and supported the merchants' and crafts' gilds. They were at once trade-unions, benefit societies, and social clubs. Their bond of union was religious—each gild had its patron saint, its religious rites, and its ecclesiastical sanction and support. In time, some of these gilds grew rich and powerful, and at last inefficient, until, at the Reformation, Henry VIII and Edward VI, taking advantage of their ecclesiastical origin, confiscated their funds and properties. These funds and properties were divided between the Crown and the nobility, to the lasting detriment of the English working classes and the friendly society or trade-union movement. With the exception of the London gilds, which were able to buy themselves off, and continued to occupy a prominent place in city life, these gilds lingered on, poverty-stricken and unknown, in obscure ways and places, until their revival at the beginning of this century.

That revival shows again the close natural connexion existing between the Christian Church and modern

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friendly societies. In numbers of cases they were revived by clergymen and ministers of religion, both in town and country. Pitying the condition of the people, these true pastors, together with wise and wealthy laymen, reorganized, subsidized, and managed some of these old societies until such time as the working-men members were able to manage them themselves. This is the genesis of many of our modern friendly societies.

But if they owe something to the Church, it is equally true that the Church owes not a little to friendly societies. They have been valuable auxiliaries in the great work of moralizing the people. At first, the modern friendly society did not seem likely to render much aid in elevating the moral and mental condition of the working classes. The lodges were held at public-houses, often of the least reputable order, and the lodge-nights were merely occasions for drinking and degrading companionships. Not a few withdrew from them in early days upon that very account. These lodge-nights were dreaded by wives, mothers, and sisters, who declared that they lost by them far more than they gained, both in money and in domestic happiness. This, of course, is largely a thing of the past. Friendly societies have proved themselves, in many ways, a boon to the working classes. They have attracted to themselves, finally, the very flower of those classes, and are now of such magnitude that it has long been seen to be necessary to their existence that they should be conducted upon a good moral, as well as upon a good financial, basis. The mottoes and rules of these societies indicate this. The Oddfellows' motto is, 'Friendship, Love, and Truth,' and the Foresters', 'Benevolence, Unity, and Concord'; and the rules of the latter declare that no one is admitted to membership 'who

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bears a bad character, who leads a dissolute life, frequents bad company, is guilty of habitual intoxication, or of quarrelsome behaviour.' If these mottoes and rules are more honoured in the observance than the breach, as undoubtedly they are, they must materially assist in the moral elevation of the working classes. Although these societies naturally and wisely refuse to identify themselves with any religious denomination, they are leavened with Christian feeling and principle. The Christian Church cannot but regard them as helpers in the work of the elevation of the people. The mental training and stimulus given by their business meetings, their frequent discussions, their habits of combination and organization, are most valuable, and they directly encourage and develop the virtues of forethought, self-reliance, self-control, thrift, sobriety, industry, and brotherly kindness. The Christian Church and modern society owe more than they know to friendly societies. They have raised a great class—the cream of the working classes of this country—directly interested in law, order, progress, and public and private morality. They have materially helped, with trade unions and co-operative societies, to solve the great problem of civilized existence for the skilled labouring classes; it only remains for them to do the same for the unskilled labouring classes, and then more than ever 'the eye and head'—the Christian Church—will be unable to say, even if she felt inclined, to 'the hands and feet'—the associated working classes—'I have no need of you.'

There is danger, on the other hand, that the associated working classes should say to the Christian Church, 'We have no need of you.' But the Christian Church is the necessary complement to friendly societies. The working

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men of England can make no greater mistake than to look coldly upon religion and the Christian Church. Morality, conscience, honour, and almost all the virtues, are essential to the successful working of trade-unions and friendly societies, as well as necessary in and for themselves. But the more it is pondered over, the more it will be seen that morality is neither self-originated nor self-supporting. It needs a basis, it needs motives, sanctions, supports, such as are given only in God and religion. Without these no morality can last long. If conscience and morality are essential to the well-being and progress of the working classes, and if these involve God and religion, then the Christian Church, as the organ of religion, is an institution which they should use, prize, and uphold. The Christian Church is indeed the necessary complement to friendly societies. The latter make provision for material wants, the former for spiritual wants.

The danger of the working classes of to-day is that in their just struggles for a fairer and larger share of the things they so largely help to produce, and in the increase of comfort which success in that struggle slowly but surely brings to them, they should become materialized. Their danger is, undue care for comfort. 'Thrift' may come to mean selfishness, injustice, grasping meanness, stinginess, the exploitation of others, and many other low and unworthy qualities. From all this the Christian Church will save them because she emphasizes the spiritual side of life. She stands as the witness in time for spirituality and eternity; her finger points to holiness, heaven, and God. 'This earth,' she cries, 'is not man's home; he soon is gone, and the place that knows him now shall soon know him no more for ever.' 'The

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kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' 'Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' This is the Church's message. A very common charge against her is that she is 'other-worldly,' that she deceives the common people by offering them a blank cheque payable in heaven. No doubt at times the Church has been too sublimely unconscious that earth is as real, though not as lasting, as heaven, that man is body as well as soul. But society can afford to forgive her! Better she should have sometimes forgotten that than the other—which, alas! she has not infrequently done, to the loss of society—better for her to be too spiritual than not spiritual enough. It is really the chief value of the Church to society that she witnesses steadily to the truth that 'the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal,' and society will do well to heed her testimony, for it is in mortal peril of over-valuing material gains and advantages, forgetting that these do not necessarily bring happiness, and certainly not goodness. The working classes must especially beware that they do not fall into the snare of the enemy, as did the middle classes, which became the stronghold of the sturdy British Philistine—that man of low ideals and gross self-satisfaction, at whom the working men have continually girded, but from whose fate in the day of their struggle and success only religion and culture will save them.

Friendly societies make material provision for the temporal future; the Christian Church provides spiritually both for the present and for the eternal future. Friendly societies invite good and necessary investment against

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financial pressure and need ; but there is another class of attendant evils against which they cannot insure a man—those of the mind and spirit. There are worse things than even pain and poverty. There is the despondency which accompanies sickness, the anxious forebodings, the sense of imperfection, unworthiness, and sin, the heart-break and anguish of sorrowing dear ones when death invades the home, the hard, lonely years awaiting the widow and fatherless when the bread-winner is struck down ! Is there any insurance against these ? The Christian Church is the only friendly society which insures men against undue sorrow, over-anxiety, the sense of unforgiven sin, the horror of death, and the terrors of the Day of Judgement ; which befriends the fatherless and the widow with consolations which the world can neither give nor take away. The Christian Church invites men to complete the insurance of their lives. The simple premium to be paid is self-surrender to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Working men who are wise enough to insure themselves against the financial demands of the future, should also be wise enough to insure themselves against the moral and spiritual needs of the present and the future. They should provide not only for the outer, but also for the inner man. The members of friendly societies, of all men, should make such provision. They who have had forethought for the temporal future, of all men, should provide for the eternal future. Having so well anticipated the less, they should go on to anticipate the greater. This can be done through Christ and His Church. Every man will inevitably come upon his lodge for the last time. His case will be visited and reported upon, the sick-pay will come, and, alas ! will go on ; the club doctor will look grave, and soon, with



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loved ones weeping round the bed, the end will come, and then in stately, slow procession the journey to the long home will be taken. There is no adequate preparation to be made for that great and inevitable day apart from Christ and the Christian Church—the necessary and most comfortable complement of the friendly society.



## XII

# DRINK AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION



## XII

### DRINK AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION

Either these poor are a race essentially different from ours, and unredeemable (which, however often implied, I have heard none yet openly say), or else, by such care as we ourselves received, we may make them continent and sober as ourselves.—RUSKIN.

THE long-foretold Social Question is now full upon society. The evidence of it is the socialization of municipal and imperial politics. The Drink Question, alas! has been long upon society also, unsolved, and apparently insoluble. What is the relation between these two questions? That is a matter much neglected, and yet it is important to both questions that it be carefully considered. The relation is really twofold and reciprocal—there is the relation of the Social Question to the Drink, and the relation of the Drink to the Social Question.

First, then, drink in relation to social conditions. Nothing is gained by making the Drink Question too simple; it is, in fact, a most complicated question. Temperance reformers are in danger of forgetting this, and advocating heroic remedies—remedies good and great, but too high and too simple. They have failed to realize the relation of social reform to drink reform

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—that the one is often a necessary preliminary to the other.

Studied in a broad and historic spirit, the Drink Question appears to be partly and largely an effect as well as a cause of both past and present social conditions. There is no doubt that the nipping, eager, wrathful cold of this Northern climate has predisposed the Anglo-Saxon race to the use of fiery stimulants; but this predisposition has been hugely fostered by the social and industrial condition of the masses of the people for centuries. Time was when beer, with its permanent possibilities of excess, was the staple drink at the meals at which now universally tea and coffee are drunk. The insufficient food, the exhausting labour, and the degrading surroundings and habits of past industrial generations, have also handed down to present times hereditary alcoholic cravings. To realize how transmissible these cravings are, there is nothing to be done but to learn the pathology and physiology of alcohol, to remember the drink-histories of some families, or to read Ibsen's ghastly play—*Ghosts*.

This fierce craving, this latent hunger for alcohol, is fostered by modern social and industrial conditions. There is the over-crowding of our great cities, their tenement houses, their slums, their insanitation, their vitiated atmosphere, and their awful dreariness! These most certainly feed the drink passion. The late Lord Shaftesbury said: 'I am sure that a great number of people who are in that condition' (debased by drink) 'have been made so by the condition of the houses in which they live.' The Report of the Royal Commission of 1880 declares that 'over-crowding lowers the general standard; the people get depressed and

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weary.' Add to this the long hours of labour, the low and precarious wages of vast masses of wage-earners, the monotony of their work and of their life, with the consequent exhaustion, weariness, ignorance, and brutality, and any one can see that the temptations to repair to the drink-shop are very great. They become almost irresistible when, in the absence of all counter-attractions, the facilities for drinking are excessive, when hard by their hovels flourish the palaces of drink. Mr. H. M. Hyndman, the Socialist, says: 'When I note that the public-houses are the only places where workmen can conveniently meet their fellows, I wonder that the very poor should be as temperate, as saving, as contented, as they are. Misery leads to gin, as well as gin to misery.'

The cure for intemperance is not as simple as it seems, either to those who advocate merely total abstinence, or to those who agitate only for the direct veto. Total abstinence on any large and effectual scale, and the condemnation of the drink traffic by the direct veto of the people in the districts where that is most needed, will be very difficult, if not impossible, to secure in the presence of the above-named social evils. With those excellent remedies, and that more doubtful palliative 'disinterested management,' must go hand-in-hand social and industrial reform—the proper and wholesome housing of the poor, reasonable hours and healthy habits of labour, the redistribution of wealth, education, a wider horizon, and higher ideals. Then, and not till then, cometh the end.

But here comes in the other sad reciprocal relation of these so complex problems. By a strange paradox, when men seek to secure the reforms by which they

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would abolish the drink, their chief obstacle is the drink itself. When needed social and industrial reforms are urged upon legislators and landowners, capitalists and employers, they are frequently refused on the ground that the working classes would drink away their advantages.

Of course such an objection is not a valid one, for even if working men would do as averred, that would be their own business ; they have still a right to justice and their own, and have as much right to resent an inquisitorial spirit as have the middle classes, who quickly resent any criticisms of their social habits, especially if they come from sources where those criticisms are of pecuniary advantage to the critics. But undoubtedly their drinking habits create a prejudice in many noble minds against the working classes. Working men must recognize that it is drink which hinders and postpones needed social and industrial reforms. It will not do to say that they will wrest from the upper classes their rights—that they have the power ! This is true, they have the power, but of what value will increased leisure, wages, and social amenities be to them unless they abandon their drinking habits and stay the drink plague ?

Those Socialists greatly mislead the working classes who deprecate their becoming total abstainers, on the ground that this will but give the employers a fresh power of reducing wages, and who, moreover, state that to cease spending will mean to damage production by reducing consumption. For this advice is, first of all, immoral, and then it is uneconomical. Both reasons should weigh with Socialists—at any rate, they will with ordinary Englishmen. Even were it true that employers would try to reduce wages when they found the workman prospering because he had given up drinking, it is utterly immoral to waste



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money required for necessities in drink. As to diminishing consumption, to abstain from strong drink will certainly diminish the consumption of strong drink, and so damage that trade ; but it will increase general consumption by leaving the workman free to spend his money in more remunerative articles of consumption. The cessation from the degrading habit of over-drinking will also raise his standard of living, and so stimulate production and improve the condition of the working classes. In fact, this argument of some Socialists in favour of continued drinking is another form of the old economic fallacy of money spent in luxury. The Socialists are very fond of demonstrating that money spent on luxury by the rich is money wasted, and they have all the economists on their side. But the excessive expenditure of the working classes upon drink is but another form of the same economic evil. It is a comfort that all the leaders of the working classes do not take this Socialist attitude. Many of them, chief among them John Burns and Keir Hardie, are total abstainers, and they, and men like J. Ramsay Macdonald, Arthur Henderson, Will Crooks, John Hodge, and others declare in no measured language that drink, as well as gambling, is a curse to the working-class movement. If the resources already wasted in drink and gambling had been used by the working classes for the amelioration of their own condition and the strengthening of their own social and industrial position, they would have been in a state of prosperity to-day. With a vast decrease in rates and taxes, with an increased demand for all sorts of labour, and their deliverance from a large amount of self-caused misery, poverty, vice, disease, and crime, their material as well as their moral condition to-day would have been infinitely

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better than it is. The working classes could have indefinitely strengthened their industrial and political power in this country, despite every existing disadvantage, had they but used the money wasted in drink and gambling in the support and development of friendly and insurance societies, of distributive and productive co-operation, in the support of trade-unions and labour organizations. There might long ago have existed a strong, intelligent, well-educated, and influential Labour Party, with numerous and respected representatives in Parliament like that now at Westminster. Well might Mr. W. R. Greg say, reviewing the third quarter of this century, 'They' (the working people of England) 'have had a golden opportunity, such as is seldom offered to a nation, of becoming respectable, comfortable, instructed, and secure—a people with a balance at its bankers', a people of capitalists instead of *prolétaires*—and to have not so much let it slip foolishly from them as flung it recklessly away' in drink, gambling, and improvidence.

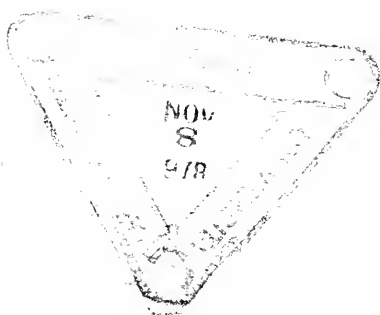
It is, then, quite true that, while social conditions have much to do with our drinking habits, we must not entirely blame the social system. The disappearance or substantial reduction of the Drink Bill, quite apart from any social reforms, would at once vastly improve the material and moral condition of the people. Its decrease to the extent of some twenty-two millions in seven years is one of the brightest signs of the times. Even in the most wretched circumstances, drink can be no alleviation, but only an intensification of personal and social misery. Despite every temptation, working men should avoid the drink as an enemy. Granted many unwarrantable temptations in their social and industrial surroundings, nevertheless after all, they are moral agents, and responsible for their

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actions. It is man's prerogative to overcome adverse circumstances. The workman possesses will-power and the grace of God; he must therefore resist, however great, the temptations to drink. Indeed, he can turn these temptations to his own advantage. Tennyson's 'Northern Cobbler' had his enemy, gin, corked up in a large bottle, and placed in the window—ever before him. After many a sore struggle, he found in the ever-present enemy a source, not of temptation, but of inspiration, enthusiasm, and strength. So, in the presence of continual organized and legalized temptations to drink, English working men must rise up in their manhood, and, with divine help, turn them from a source of stumbling into one of inspiration and indignant strength.

Drink reform should occupy a very prominent place in the workers' programme. It should begin with the work of moral suasion and the protection of the young. Earnest efforts should be put forth to secure wide-spread habits of total abstinence, or, at least, the practice of the severest moderation in the use of intoxicating drinks. Then the movement should work up to the most desirable end of reducing the number of legalized temptations to drink and strictly controlling the drink-trade. The working classes should demand such legislation as shall prevent rich brewers, drink-lords, and dividend-hunters from preying upon the labouring portion of the community for their own financial advantage. They should never rest until such selfish, wasteful, and anti-social conduct is legally restrained. Until these things be done, one of the gravest hindrances to social reform will remain to block the way.







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